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THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic



DEVIL DOLL

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Child's Play 2

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Introduction

Recent reports in the American trade paper, *Variety* and its English counterpart, *Screen International*, have pointed to the declining boxoffice popularity of horror movies and suggested that the genre may be on the way out with Hollywood and the general public. That's so maybe, but as we all know, it only takes one good, original genre served up in recent years is that they've all relied too heavily on gross-out special effects for their impact. Hitchcock proved with the legendary shower-bath murder in *PSYCHO* that what you DON'T show can be far more effective; all the cutting was done by Hitch in the editing room, and you never actually see that knife going into Janet Leigh's naked body!

It's a shame more of today's moviemakers don't go back and study some of the horror classics before they set off to make *FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 18* or whatever. Back in the days when movies didn't have the special effects technology to convincingly show us the human body being reduced to its component parts, they had to rely on - horror of horrors - a decent script, good acting, and the power of the viewer's own imagination. Remember Robert Wise's *THE HAUNTING*, Jack Clayton's *THE INNOCENTS*, and Jacques Tourneur's *NIGHT OF THE DEMON*? The latter was a truly spine-tingling adaptation of the M.R. James short story, *CASTING THE RUMES*, and one of its most frightening sequences had the film's hero, Dono Andrews, pursued through a dark wood by an unseen demonic figure that left monstrous footprints in the ground as it slowly gained on him. *NIGHT OF THE DEMON* has come to be regarded as a classic of the field, but interestingly, genre buffs always complain that the film's impact was reduced greatly by its fast-back-orientated producer's decision to go against Tourneur's wishes and actually show the monster in the final scenes. It's true. And it proves - if any proof were really needed - that what lies in one's imagination is always more terrifying than the handiwork of even the very best of makeup men.

That's why most of the really scary stuff nowadays comes off the printed page courtesy of Clive Barker, Stephen King, Ramsey Campbell, Joe Lansdale, Dean R. Koontz et al. But good horror material is still turning up on both the big screen and the small. How many of you were lucky enough to catch the recent television adaptation of the Kingsley Amis ghost story, *THE GREEN MAN*? Firmly adult in tone, it was wittily scripted by Malcolm Bradbury, beautifully acted by Albert Finney, and even had room for some gross-out gore effects. People are also saying good things about *JACOB'S LADDER*, the terrifying tale of the nightmares that beset Vietnam veteran Tim Robbins on the New York subway. This could very well be the movie that brings the genre back into favour. But don't get me wrong, I don't believe it is OUT of favour. The pundits can say what they wish, but the basic fact remains that whereas people may grow bored of Westerns or War epics, they will always love to be scared. There seem to be inside us a constant yearning for the darkly mysterious, for the choked terror of the dark. Whether Hollywood can satisfy this yearning is another matter altogether, but there's too much money involved for them not to keep giving it the good old-fashioned try...



Allan Bryce

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TERROPS TOY BOY

Watch out kiddies, it's slaytime once more as the devilish Chucky returns in **CHILD'S PLAY 2**. Our own living doll - Maitland McDonagh - brings us the inside story...



Chucky was very much the worse for wear at the end of *Child's Play*... decapitated and burned to a blackened heap, in fact. Not resurrecting him couldn't have been easier: he is, after all, just a doll. A Good Guy doll.

to be exact, though Chucky is anything but. Possessed by the malevolent spirit of psycho-killer Charles Lee Ray, Chucky murdered his way through his motion picture debut, reminding audiences everywhere just

how creepy dolls can be. "After *Child's Play* I got lots of letters" says producer David Kirschner, "from people who said they'd gone home, looked into the kid's room and thought, 'this is the scariest room in the house. All those eyes, all those chubby little plastic hands...' When I was a kid I was scared to death of my sisters' dolls. My daughters have a bunch of the same dolls today, and I want to say to them, 'don't those things scare the hell out of you?'"

Stuart Gordon exploited the same iconography in *Dolls*, but *Child's Play* hit a nerve with mainstream moviegoers as well as exploitation fans. For all Kirschner's protests that *Child's Play* "isn't meant for children; that's why it's an R-rated film", it's a wonder Chucky dolls weren't flying the shelves of toy stores within weeks of the film's release.

Child's Play 2 director John Lafia is no newcomer to Chucky's world. A UCLA graduate, his first produced credit was *Child's Play*; he did several rewrites on original author Don Mancini's script. Lafia was, in fact, producer David Kirschner's first choice to direct. But, says Kirschner, "the studio wanted someone with more experience," so the honours went to Tom (Fright Night) Holland. Soon after, Lafia made *The Blue Iguana* from his own screenplay, and when *Child's Play 2* went into production, Kirschner brought him in as director.

Child's Play 2 begins with Chucky's reconstruction by unscrupulous toy manufacturers. While much of the satirising of American toy production and marketing was deleted from *Child's Play*, the sequel takes up the theme with a vengeance. "I really don't want the guys on Madison Avenue programming a best friend for my daughters," says Kirschner. "On the Good Guys box in *Child's Play* it says



Alex Vincent

"Share all your secrets with him," and I think that's a scary thing. I want my children to share their secrets with something that lives and breathes and has emotions, not something programmed by a marketing group on Madison Avenue.

Once Chucky is back on his little plastic feet, he goes looking for young Andy Barclay (Alex Vincent, reprising his role), the unfortunate child whose life he just about ruined in *Child's Play*. Andy's mother has been placed under psychiatric supervision, and he's in foster care. His new family - played by Jennifer (An American Werewolf in London) Agutter and Cerrit (Phantom of the Paradise) Graham - have the best intentions,



Toddler terror

but they take a dim view of his unswerving conviction that Chucky's back for more.

"It's the classic boy-who-cried-wolf situation," says Kirschner. "This little boy is crying wolf... but there really is a wolf there". With Chucky at the door, the blood begins to flow. And odds are this won't be the last time. "Child's Play 2 was tested across the United States and did really well," says Kirschner. "I mean, by the god,

when we got to the scenes in the Good Guy factory, people were screaming so loudly you could hardly hear what was happening on screen. In fact, after one screening MCA Pictures Group Chairman Tom Pollock said to me, 'I have just three words to say to you: Child's Play 3.'"

John Lafia spoke to *Dark Side* about *Child's Play 2* just prior to the film's US release.

DARK SIDE: What was the extent of your contribution to the first *Child's Play* picture?

JOHN LAFIA: The original writer, Don Mancini, wrote the first draft of *Child's Play*. I came in and did three more, which



Chucky at play

then got the film the green light. I then left to do my own film (*After Image*) and Tom Holland came in. He did some additional rewriting, as well as directing.

I made a few fundamental changes in the material. For one thing, I created the relationship between Chucky and his alter-ego, Charles Lee Ray: the whole idea of this guy who enters the body of the doll was mine. In the first script there was no explanation of how the doll came to life - it just did.

I made the doll far more malicious... though make no mistake, he was an evil

little guy to begin with. I also made it more domestic. Originally the parents were in advertising, very yuppie, and directly connected to the merchandising of the doll that turns around and torments them. I made the family situation more ordinary - a single mother and her child are totally victimized by Chucky.

DARK SIDE: Do you feel your background as a writer given you any particular advantages as a director?

LAFIA: There's a real advantage for a director in having been a writer first. It teaches you to think about options, so that when something doesn't work on the set you can always change it. I've seen directors get stuck when something isn't working, spinning their wheels about how they're going to make it work, rather than thinking 'I don't have to do it this way. I can do something else.'

Also, especially when you're directing your own script, you've got a real advantage with the actors. You know their characters, know who they were and how they



Chucky in the kitchen

the idea of ghosts. I think most kids do. It's a real rich, primal thing kids can relate to. I mean, little boys love gots and gross-outs... they just do. It all kind of just fits together somehow.

Dolls, little fake people, have a primordial ability to unsettle people. And I think technology has only made it worse. Talking dolls were bad enough when you had to pull a string or see an on-off switch. Now you don't even have to touch them - the animatronic dolls react to your voice. That's scary!

DARK SIDE: *Child's Play 2* is a far cry from your first film, *The Blue Iguana*.

LAFIA: Very different from *Blue Iguana*, which I wrote completely on spec with the intention that I would direct it. David Kirschner picked up the first script ages ago, and he really was the champion of the idea of *Child's Play* and *Child's Play 2*. I felt an obligation to get in tune with what he wanted to do. It's a less personal film for me, as well as being a more straightforward genre piece.

Blue Iguana drew from a multitude of genres, combining, transmuting, mixing them in an unusual way. *Child's Play 2* is just a scary movie with a sense of humor.

DARK SIDE: Between the elaborate effects and the central child actor, the film *Don't try this at home, kiddies*



must have been a nightmare.

LAFIA: I wouldn't use the word 'nightmare', but working with special effects takes a lot of patience. People have to understand that special effects take a lot of time and money. If you talk to effects guys and, more important, listen to what they're telling you, there's no reason things can't go fairly smoothly. They know how long it's going to take. They know the limitations of the technology. You have to accept their parameters, or risk the effect. If you tease them out and say, no, no, no...



Piggyback - Chucky style!

I can get through that faster or cheaper. Look out! The bottom line is that it may take you eight hours and 40 takes to get one shot.

Kevin Yagher was extremely helpful. Having done the first film, he was full of ideas about things he wanted to improve. There were something like nine dolls, and each one was suited for a particular thing. I spent a tremendous amount of time with him at his shop, looking at the dolls, studying the dolls, watching the guys work the dolls, taping the dolls, seeing exactly what the physical limitations were in terms of staging.



Always check your dolls for sharp objects...

got in where they are, know how they change by the end of the story - you can pass all that on to the actors. You have answers. And if you don't, you're equipped to make them up.

DARK SIDE: The image of a killer doll is a very potent one - does it have any special resonance for you?

LAFIA: Not really. I do remember, though, that when I was a little kid I enjoyed dismembering my sisters' dolls and trying to scare them with the pieces. I hung the doll parts on walls and stuff. I enjoyed scaring them, and they enjoyed being scared.

DARK SIDE: Does your therapist have anything to say about this doll dismembering business?

LAFIA: My therapist says it's very healthy that I'm making a living from executing these feelings. I'm not on a hell tower somewhere.

I think nightmares are good - it's good to be scared. I loved being scared when I was a child. I would seek out horror films and scary stories; I loved Halloween and



Chucky makes friends



"This is my best role!"

In a way the harder element was working with the child. The doll was tough technically, but the doll's voice was an adult actor - Brad Dourif - and he could give you an incredible performance. With a child you're dealing with someone whose attention span is fairly short, whose experience is limited, who takes an enormous amount of coaxing and coaxing and cajoling and game playing. It's an exhausting thing to do, particularly in scenes where he's playing against the doll. It's hard enough for an adult to play against an inanimate object, let alone a child. It's an enormous challenge.

DARK SIDE: How did you co-ordinate Dourif's performance?

LAFIA: Ed Warshawitz, who was the editor on the first film also edited this one. He told me repeatedly what hell it was synchronizing up the doll and really, there had to be a better way to do it. So he and Kevin worked something out, and the results were amazing. On *Child's Play*, they didn't know what voice they were going to use. So during shooting, Tom Holland would feed the lines to the actors, and later they had Brad come in and try to lip-synch to the doll. He found that to be nearly impossible, because the rhythm of the lips and the movements of the doll weren't his - it was like trying to lip-synch another actor. In fact, he didn't want to do the second movie for that reason - they spent weeks and



Hide and seek

weeks and weeks looping.

This time, I gave Brad the script, showed him the storyboards of the scenes, talked about the intention of particular pieces of dialogue and business. It was like a comic book of his performance. It took us two days of pre-record all of his dialogue. We did some alternate readings - faster, slower, whatever - and then all of it was transferred to quarter inch tape and slowed down to 15 frames per second. That way, the effects guys had a little more leeway for the articulation of the doll's mouth. On the set we had two mags - one with playback, one recording live. After Brad's voice there would be three loops and then the guys would match it to the take. In dailies we sped it all back up to 24 frames per second and suddenly Chucky was speaking perfectly in real time. It worked beautifully. The great thing was that Brad was actually able to deliver a performance, which in turn gave me something to base the whole doll performance on.

I'd say 50% of the dialogue in the finished film is from that original session.



The remaining 20% we had to re-record for various technical reasons, or because we needed a slightly different reading on something, or added a line.

Another way in which I had the benefit of other people's experience was in how much Chucky talked. In the first film there are scenes of him sitting and talking at great length, and I don't think it really works - it gives people too long to think about the illusion, and the longer they think, the more its power dissipates. So almost all of our Chucky speaking scenes are one or two lines, followed by action. Seeing the doll move is really scary.

There were a few technical hitches at first that involved getting the sound and picture up to speed in sync, but all in all it was pretty painless, and I'd certainly do it the same way again.

DARK SIDE: There seems to be an element of social satire in *Child's Play 2* that was largely lacking in the first film.

LAFIA: There's a satirical aspect to this script on several levels. One has to do with the process of creating, selling and advertising a doll. We have all these scenes at the factory, with executives trying to figure out what went wrong with Chucky and how they can minimize the impact on their Good Guys line. On top of that, there's an element that has to do with family structures. Remember *Leave It to Beaver* and *Dennis the Menace*? Chucky is kind of the ultimate Dennis the Menace, come to stay with you.

DARK SIDE: Any last words?

LAFIA: It was great to see this movie all come together in the end - there were so many elements, so many things that had to work just right and be integrated with everything else. And they all did.

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WELCOME TO THE TIME WARP

"There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow - between science and superstition; between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. It is an area we call... The Twilight Zone..."

These words, spoken in a measured, matter-of-fact manner by Rod Serling, introduced one of the most celebrated and long-running fantasy series ever to appear on American television. THE TWILIGHT ZONE made its debut on the CBS network in the autumn of 1959 and successfully ran for five years, during which time it earned immense critical and public acclaim, numerous awards, and turned Serling, in his capacity as the show's creator, producer, prin-

cipal writer and onscreen host, into one of TV's best-known faces.

Rod Serling was the son of a wholesale butcher from Birmingham, New York, who saw service as a paratrooper during the Second World War. After the war he entered Antioch College on the GI Bill and began to develop a talent for writing which flourished in the early days of live television drama. His 1955 play, PATTERNS, won him his first Emmy award, and two more soon followed for THE CO-

MEDIAN and REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT, placing Serling in the most rank of TV's most respected dramatists.

But because his plays were serious in their presentation of important contemporary issues he found himself battling with network censors who wanted to "water down" his material and would insist on script revisions for often the most trivial of reasons. One instance saw all references to "Hitler's gas ovens" being removed from a Serling

play because a gas company was sponsoring the show, and it was this kind of interference that led him to abandon serious TV drama in favour of the less restricted atmosphere provided by a fantasy series like THE TWILIGHT ZONE.

One of the most amusing episodes of the series, called THE BARD, had hack writer Jack Western summoning up the ghost of William Shakespeare to help him write a television script, only to find that the finished product did



Charles Bronson in 'Steel'

not meet with the approval of network executives. In this way Serling frequently made sly comments on the strange necessity of his employers, just as he used the fantasy format of the series for more serious examinations of the nature of Fascism (THE LUTES) and mass hysteria (THE MONSTERS ARE BORN ON MAPLE STREET). The subjects explored in the series were as boundless as Rod Serling's own imagination, but even the most fanciful were buoyed to reality by the solid dramatic strength of his writing. He suffered from insomnia and kept a tape recorder by his bed to store ideas that came to him as he was trying to sleep, and could complete a TWILIGHT ZONE script in 25 hours.

Working exhausting 18-hour days, during which he usually smoked four packs of cigarettes, he was a workaholic driven on by the constant fear that his writing skills would dry up. Even when the series finished in 1965 he continued to maintain a fierce pace. In 1975 he suffered a heart attack, and died following open heart surgery.

But THE TWILIGHT ZONE lives on as part of 25th century mythology. Steven Spielberg produced a feature movie of the show in 1983, and a revamped colour series (based upon American television a couple of years later, The Black and White originals are still the best, though, and it's good news to find that CBS Fox Video are releasing boxes of the finest episodes on three separate all-through tapes. Now a whole new generation can be transported to Rod Serling's wondrous fifth dimension, and appreciate the talent of one of television's finest writers.



NIGHT OF THE

LIVING DEAD

lines world wide, but very little of the money found its way back to the original investors (sadly, not an unusual state of affairs for a low budget first film made without a distribution deal). Romero's assertion that the decision to go ahead with a remake was purely a financial one makes sense, and it's hard to begrudge the original investors their chance to see a profit.

Certainly, Romero and Soria have rung changes on the material. The character of Barbara, played in the new film by striking stunt woman Patricia Tallman, has been substantially rewritten. While in the first film Barbara (Judith O'Dea) starts out terrified and retreats gradually into near catatonia, in the remake she gradually becomes more resourceful and self-reliant; by the

Zombies stalk the screen once more in the long-awaited remake of George Romero's 60's classic. Mattland McDonagh talks to the film's director, superstar makeup man Tom Savini.

It's all a little bit confusing. The ads promise that it's "All New, All Color" but it's *Night of the Living Dead*, with George A. Romero's name worked into the title for good measure. How can these things be?

The movie in question is Tom Savini's color remake of *Night of the Living Dead*, executive produced by Romero (with Menocheam Galan) from his own screenplay, in turn based on the screenplay he wrote in 1968 with John A. Russo. Budgeted at more than \$8.4 million—modest bucks by today's standards, but 40 times what the original film cost—the new *Night of the Living Dead* is the same... only different. The movie industry routinely cannibalizes itself (a particularly apt metaphor in this instance): remakes of old films with contemporary twists, domestic productions of foreign films, sequels, prequels and high-concept hybridizations keep the same concepts in constant circulation. Ideas don't get created or destroyed, only changed.

But this is a little different. *Night of the Living Dead 1990* is the 1968 film repackaged by many of the original participants... the director, screenwriters and producers among them. It really is the same film. And that's about what you'd expect,

given that the remake wasn't motivated by anyone's need to make a new and novel statement by way of the zombie metaphor. Between Romero's two sequels, *Down and Out in the Dead*, the two *Return of the Living Dead* sort-of sequels, and the scores of cannibal zombie gut-crunchers inspired by Romero's groundbreaking picture, that vein has been worked to death—no pun intended. The original *Night of the Living Dead* made mil-





Ben (Tony Todd) fights off yet another Zombie travelling salesman

end of the film she's the toughest one of them all.

The ending undergoes a less conceptually successful shift. Without giving too much away, here Ben (Tony Todd) still winds up dead, but under slightly different circumstances than those of the original: It still packs a punch, but it's not the body blow of seeing Ben, who has survived the zombie onslaught, shot through the head by a redneck posse who don't realize he's one of them, rather than one of them. In several places the script plays an audience expectations, staging scenes that look exactly like scenes from the first film, then giving them a little twist. It all works: Savini's direction is tight and straightforward, which is exactly what the material needs. It's a perfectly enjoyable experience, once you get over asking, "Why?"



Zombies shouldn't play with fire!

This is Savini's first theatrical feature. He cut his directing teeth on three episodes of the television series *Tales from the Darkside*. Despite a tight schedule, modest budget (particularly when you factor in the special effects, which can't be the crude approximations that were acceptable 30 years ago), the reputation of the first film and the shadow of the MPAA's ever stricter guidelines on violence ("We always figured they were going to be tough on a film with George's and my names on it."), Savini took to the project with admirable calm.

"I really believe that limitations make you more creative," he says, and emphasizes that it was never intended to be "a splatter movie, an exercise in MTV style death." Though the zombie effects by longtime Savini collaborators John Vulich and Everett Burrell

are 10 years away from the point where make-ups of the original film, we're not talking a zombie effects national hero: either Ben or Vulich took their inspiration from real life (or death, more correctly), rather than effects extravaganzas like *Down and Day of the Dead*; they went to morgues, autopsies and other authentic sources and came up with a panoply of recently dead cadavers.

Savini spoke with *Dark Side* shortly before the film's US release.

DARK SIDE: How did this project come together?

SAVINI: I was having dinner at George's house one night and we were just chatting. He said he had put together financing for a remake of *Night of the Living Dead*, and I was really excited about doing the effects. I started talking about the interesting zombies I could create, and George stopped me and said he had been thinking about me as the director. Inside I was a screaming banshee, but outside I managed to be calm and restrict myself to saying, "That



Savini's cancer Zombie!

would be great, George. Just great."

In his interview, George says he decided to do the remake for financial reasons - he owns the title, he was able to get financing, and it meant he was finally able to pay back the original investors. You know, the original *Night of the Living Dead* made a fortune, but George and the original investors didn't see any of it. It was a bad business deal and they were screwed. It says something about George that all these years later he was still concerned and wanted to find a way to pay them back.

DARK SIDE: Once you decided to direct, how did you go about choosing an effects team?

SAVINI: I picked the best guys I could find to work with, and that meant Everett Burrell and John Vulich. We had just finished working on *Two Evil Eyes*, which was a collaboration between George and Dario Argento, and even then we were talking zombie concepts. The things they were saying were right on the money, so it was an easy transition.

DARK SIDE: Was it hard to give up control over the special effects?

SAVINI: It was weird, not having blood all over me at the end of the day; I'm an ass and I'm going



Who's got the picnic basket?

SAVINE: When I was talking in director of photography in New York I always told them the look I wanted was film noir in colour. Frank Price knew just how to do that: from the beginning, the things he said about lighting convinced me he was to the right track. He even had it in his contract that he would supervise the colour timing - he knew I wanted it dark, dark, dark, even if you had to strale to see things.

The opening scene is very different from what I had in mind originally. The script had a raging thunderstorm going on, and at the very least I wanted it to be gloomy and overcast. But the budget and schedule forced us to shoot it in broad daylight, and in the end it worked. We had to work against the stereotype of the dark and stormy night, with the flashes of lightning and the thunderclaps that make everybody jump. To be honest, that always reminds me of a cartoon I saw when I was a kid. There's lightning and thunder and rain and there are two bats hanging on a tree saying, "Do all horror movies have to begin this way?"

DARK SIDE: Your cast is very strong, which isn't true of the cast of the original film. They're... variable.

SAVINE: That's kind. Piffed, really. A couple of them are okay, but overall George was working with non-professionals and just had to do the best he could. With the exception of the actress who plays Barbara, I cast actors who look very physically similar to the actors in the first film. I thought that would help people get into the remake by seeing the shock.

Tony Todd, who plays Ben, is probably best known for having been in *Pitofeen*. He was in *Pitofeen*, shooting a movie, and saw a crew member wearing a Two Evil Eyes jacket. When he found out we were doing auditions for a remake of *Night of the Living Dead*, he came in and read. From the moment he walked into the room I knew he looked perfect. I wanted so badly for him to read well. And he did... he blew me away. He was the only actor who was handed

the script moments before he had to read and memorized his lines in that time; he did his audition without a script in his hand.

Patty Tallman, who plays Barbara, was someone I had worked with on *Darkside*. I cast her for a stunt on the first episode. I did, and even then I wanted to cast her in the lead. I got static from the producers, so I didn't, but I cast her in the lead on my third episode. The first time I met her she was in a fight class, kicking the shit out of her boyfriend - strangling him, kicking his head on the floor. She's a fight director, a former she plays Red Soja at the Universal Tour. Physically, I knew the problem would be to make her seem fragile at the beginning, so there would be some contrast when she turned into Sigourney Weaver. In the end she was just great.

Tom Towles, who plays Harry, was Otis in *Henry Portrait of a Serial Killer*. He was recommended to me by John Valich and Kenneth Barrell - they had worked with him on John McNaughton's second film, *The Remover*. As soon as I saw his picture and talked to him on the phone, I knew he was the guy. I had trouble casting him, though. I had to write George a long letter explaining why I thought he was perfect - George's wife didn't like him or something.

Mekeo Anderson I met in New York - she came in crying, with her lines memorized, and physically she was close to the original Helen, so it seemed natural to go with her. The little girl, Heather... it's a shame she had such a small role. She could have played Barbara, Helen, Harry... she could have played any role in that film. You said one thing to her and she

picked up on it.

Who else? That boy, Bill Butler, was 13 or 14. He does a lot in movies: one of the *Friday* boys. I'm not my grandfather's son again. I have seen Katie Flanagan, who plays his girlfriend. She was a freshman at *Utopia* in *Utopia*, and she was just the best of the actresses who auditioned.

DARK SIDE: Because the story is so small scale, it's very important that the cast work as an ensemble, not just individually.

SAVINE: A choir is as strong as its weakest link, and when I go to see a film, a really bad, stupid moment can ruin the whole thing for me, that was the case in the original *Night of the Living Dead*. The young couple were preposterous... they were dying, but it wasn't working.

DARK SIDE: What was the production schedule?

SAVINE: We had eight weeks of pre-production, then six weeks of shooting. We were supposed to have ten weeks in all, but during the shoot 21st-Century made a distribution deal with Columbia and needed the picture sooner in order to get it out by Halloween. So we edited in less than four weeks.

DARK SIDE: Do you think this remake will help bring *Night of the Living Dead* to a new audience?

SAVINE: I don't know. The original is shown every Halloween 25 times a day, so I think most everybody who would want to, has seen it. What I hope will happen is that the die-hard fanatics will watch the original *Night of the Living Dead* on television and then rush out and see the remake in the theatres. I'd like to see the two pictures work together.

Some folks take dieting too far...



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VIDEO VAULT

Key to the ratings:
 *** - excellent
 ** - good
 * - mediocre
 - - poor

The door to the video vault creaks open. The Dark Side tunes in to the latest in TV terror.

GATE II MGM UA Video

Redd Foxx had quite a hit a few years back with the original *GATE* movie, which you may remember was about a bunch of kids who accidentally opened the gate to hell in their suburban back yard and let loose a beautifully animated horde of 3FX monsters. This limited sequel offers more of the same thing, with *Faustian* overtones, as misin 12-year-old Louie Tripp (a survivor of the first outing) opens the gate on purpose in the hope that the devil will be able to sort out his acne problems and brighten up his fogging social life.

He conjures up one tiny pre-mortal demon (that looks similar to the Venusian creature in *Moenchhausen's* 20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH). But his activities are interrupted by the arrival of a neighborhood gang, one of whom takes flight and plugs the midgler monster between the eyes. When Tripp takes the dead creature home he discovers it can be used to gain entry with his desires - like getting his alcoholic dad a job as an airline pilot (P), and dreaming up a gleaming red Corvette to pull the girl of his dreams (Patricia Leggett). But yes, you guessed it, there's a *Monkey's Paw* type note here: every wish is as temporary as a politician's promise, and inevitably turns into a pile of smelly brown stuff within hours.

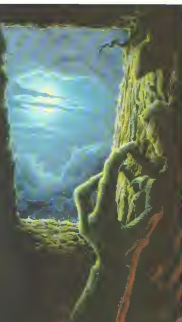
What with this, the original *GATE* movie, and *HARD COVER* (aka *I, MADMAN*), director Tibor Takacs seems determined to single-handedly resurrect the lost art of stop-motion special effects. Good luck to him, but unfortunately he has yet to find a wholly satisfactory narrative in which to locate Marshall Cook's impressively animated creatures. This one has some good effects, but lapses into predictability and is far too good-natured to be scary even the monster that gets

sacrificed in Tripp's black magic ceremony rises up alive and well later in the picture.

But it's quite enjoyable nonetheless, a bummer for half brightening up quite considerably for a pleasingly surrealistic finale (incorporating some truly splendid Ogie Yagdon makeup as Tripp's pals are changed into bloodsucking demons). Add

some classy camerawork and a potent-but murky score, and you have a nice change from your normal low-grade video offerings. Not a classic by any means, but a clever-headed step in the right direction.

Continued 15. Running Time: 99 minutes.
 M.T.



METAMORPHOSIS: THE ALIEN FACTOR
CCB Pictures
88

Forget Kaffka and settle down for a hairy, old-fashioned monster yarn set in a very low-budget research establishment deep within the earth's core. It is there that the sinister Telos Corporation is conducting genetic experiments with alien cells from another galaxy. Nice work if you can get it? Not really, because a butter-fingered b*itch drops a test tube, and before you can say "Great Ridley Scott! he has been transformed into a pulpy mutant life form with a fondness for pulling the faces off security guards.

That's it on the plot front apart from the introduction of a few hapless teens who come to the establishment to find out what has happened to their security guard dad (yup - he's had his face pulled off). The rest of the film is made up of watching the same small group of bad actors running around in dark corridors while the monster slurs

around after them eventually metamorphosing into a stop-motion puppet creature that looks very much like the giant mollusk from **THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD** ("What in god's name is that thing?" I don't know - but I'm not taking its temperature!).

Script and performances are perfunctory to say the least, and some of the camerawork is a bit dark - though I was assured by CCB this was a fault on my early review copy only. This is obviously one of those movies made by a group of up-and-coming effects folk to showcase their work, and it was probably fairly late in the day before they realised it might be a good idea to throw a storyline alongside all those gross-out highlights borrowed from **ALIEN**, **THE THING** and **THE EVIL DEAD**. Still, the effects are certainly impressive, and plentiful enough to satisfy the less demanding gore movie buff, even if John Agar's presence is sorely missed.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 88 minutes.
R.M.



SHADOWS RUN BLACK
Vestron Video
8

This sleazy slasher flick reveals its true colours right from the word go, the (understandably) shaky camera moving in for salacious scenes of youngsters indulging in some serious heavy-petting in the back of a car while outside in the dark a voyeuristic killer poses to strike. Nicknamed **The Black Angel**, this particular nutcase follows a familiar M.O. of waiting for his young attractive college co-ed victims to get at least raped before he moves in to ventilate them with a conning knife.

The police are of course baffled, and have to resort to rounding up all the worst-dressed creeps in town and shouting such sinister threats at them in the interview room as "Tell us what you know, Scotty-baby, or you're gonna take a big fall. This doesn't work and in the meantime lots more co-eds fall under the knife, including one silly girl who attempts to hide from the killer in the shower and another who drowns the death cad at a party game and then goes off to take a lone night topless swim. In fact all ANY female in this movie has to do to qualify for a body bag is get semi-naked. The only one who keeps her rap on long enough to make it to the end titles is good girl Elizabeth Trosper, and her acting is so bad that this is not a cheering prospect.

You can tell from the presence of an as-yet-undiscovered Kevin Costner way down the cast list that this is not a new movie. It bears a copyright date of 1983 but could be even older, judging by the fact that everyone dresses the same way they do in **PRISONER CELL BLOCK II** (the killer is given away by his awful taste in polo necks). Amateurish in all departments, and offensively racist (there's a naff subplot about the heroine's involvement with a coloured guy) and sexist in tone, this is a grubby affair indeed. I shouldn't

care to meet the folks who made it.
Certificate 18. Running Time: 89 minutes.
A.D.

MIRAGE
New World Video
16

I wish this **WERE** a mirage, but no, it's yet another boring walk and slash effort indistinguishable from a thousand others like it. A group of blonde-haired Collingwood pop group Bucks Fizz set out for a caffeine weekend camping break in the desert and fall foul of a mysterious psycho who shadows them in a sinister black muck and picks em off one at a time in a suitably glibly fashion.

As always the murders are the best part of the show. One victim is buried up to his head in the sand and left to chew on a hand grenade while someone else gets gruesomely drawn and quartered (though that's the obligatory nightmare sequence so perhaps it doesn't count). In fact the gore here is surprisingly heavy-duty particularly in the final scenes where the film's wopid heroine (Jennifer McAllister) does a **DELIVERANCE** number and marks the bad guys up with an arrow through the mouth and out the back of his head - this doesn't stop him of course, but it does give him pause for thought.

The **DUEL**-like aspects of the plot (you don't see the driver of the black muck until the end) are largely left unexplored, as are the killers' motives - though the kids play enough lousy rock music to drive ANYONE to thoughts of homicide. Instead all we get are a collection of half-way decent gore scenes and some fetching female nudity dutifully located in a storyline that even Jason Voorhees would discard as being too facile. You'll see right through it.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 85 minutes.
M.T.





PSYCHOCOP RCA Columbia Video

You have the right to remain silent: says police officer Joe Vickers (Bobby Ray Shriver) with a cheeky smile as he shoves a screwdriver through a dumb teenager's mouth. Those who thought MANIAC COP a tad overrated will agree that it looks like a genuine four star masterpiece when stood up alongside this manicomic copycat slosher movie. Three beer-swilling college students taking their girlfriends for a weekend in the country soon find their number decimated by the eponymous basket case in blue - a thubby-faced Liberace lookalike who can seemingly pop up in half a dozen different places at the same time and makes more comebacks than Gary Glitter. Some old claptrap is named out about Vickers being a devil-worshipper who got through the police exam on a slow day, but the origin of psychocop is left largely unexplored in a plot that has been ripped out a hundred times before. Its join-the-dots filmmaking, with characters that you can't tell apart. They all very much sound and say things like I think somebody's watching us just before they go off in the dark on their own to hang up the washing at something. Even the murders - performed with axes, screwdrivers, electric cattle-prods, carving knives etc - are poorly staged with joke-shop special effects. Don't get taken in by this one - it's hardly an inspiring experience!

Certificate 18. Running Time: 84 minutes.
A.S.

MOON 44 Mushu Home Video

The spectre of Ridley Scott's BLADE RUNNER haunts this good-looking science-fiction thriller from German film-buff-turned-director Roland Emmerich. Set in the year 2036 on MOON 44, a gleaming mining planet not unlike

the one Marshall Sean Connery found himself on in OUTLAND it's basically a space western with mean n moody Michael Pate playing a maniacal lawman dispatched on an undercover mission to stop a bunch of amery space pirates from his jacking vital space shuttles.

The picture takes its cue from Pate's raucous performance, which makes even John Wayne at his most laid-back look animated by comparison. Pate's character supposedly reads Shakespeare, Swift and Kafka, but no evidence of this can be found in his conversation - in fact he comes across as being on an intellectual par with a Lego brick as he slides purposefully through the rubbish-strewn high-tech environment, not even pausing for the obligatory romantic dalliance with token heroine Lisa Eichhorn (whose contribution to the story remains a mystery).

The film's supposed \$14 million budget has been well spent but the movie's spectacular visuals easily overwhelm the diluted



native. The dialogue is mainly of the 'You some kind of a tough guy?' variety, and the storyline is a patchwork of everything from SHANE to BLUE THUNDER - the latter connection being doubly reinforced by the presence of Malcolm McDowell reprising his memorable baddle from John Badham's 80's hit.

Action fans will probably get their money's worth - most of the film's running time seems to be made up of video game-type shootouts between helicopter

gunships and enemy tanks, the good guys piloting their futuristic choppers through windblown, smoke-filled cityscapes at suicidal speeds guided only by barmy young navigators who sit safely in the base control room. But this is cliché stuff, and hardly the whole new experience in sci-fi adventure promised by the costume cover!

Certificate 15. Running Time: 93 minutes approx.
M.1.





WATCHERS II RCA Columbia Video

They say that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, and this appalling new schlock opus from the Roger Corman kennels proves the truth of that adage. It's yet another money grab, an adaptation of the Dean R. Koontz bestseller (which Corman mucked up the first time around) and though this one is more faithful to the book's narrative, it's still a waster of the first order, and one can only marvel at Roger's audacity in unleashing it.

The star of the show is a Golden Retriever named Einstein, who has been taught to read and write by animal trainer Tracy Scoggins (making a downward career move from *THE COUNTRY*). The dog gives the best performance by far, and if (perish the thought) there's ever a *WATCHERS III*, then I recommend this canine model (the dog, not Tracy), have a hand in the script – because he couldn't do any worse than the dismal that is served up here. (Example – Mad scientist lying through his teeth: "We didn't create a killing machine. Why do you ask?") The story takes off when a group of animal rights activists storm Tracy's lab and let loose both Einstein and the dog's genetic "twin" – a rubbery-looking monster known as The Outlander, who looks like a bargain basement version of *Godzilla* (he didn't quite get finished. The monster is part of an idiotic government research programme run by Mary Voronov (who should know better) and once set loose is programmed to rack down the dog and slaughter anyone foolish enough to shelter the animal. In this case that means that Tracy and AWOL marine Marc Singer (whose career hasn't exactly skyrocketed since *V*). Just why the US government should want to spend even a dollar of research money on creating a perfect assassin that can be heard a mile off as it stomps through walls sllobbering and roaring. Is anybody's guess. The film could have been

fun in a trashy '50s way, but it lacks both energy and originality, and too much of the running time is devoted to 'cute' sequences in which the clever doggie shows what it can do. If you always wanted to see an 18-rated Rat-Tin-Tin movie then here's your chance. Others are advised to stay well clear.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 94 minutes.
M.T.

DEATHSTONE Bono Communications

Shot in the Philippines, where life is cheap and film budgets are even cheaper, this entry-level supernatural thriller should really have starred Manila's favourite son, John Ashley (whom bad-movie buffs revere for his triumphal *BLOOD ISLAND* trilogy). But local hero John has now agreed to produce intellectual TV shows like *THE A TEAM*, so the makers had to get Jon-Michael Vincent to star instead. If only he had John's charisma.



At well, the guy kicks off with American journalist Nancy Everhard (a friend of Larry Grayson?) entering an archaeological tomb and being possessed by the spirit of a three-centuries-old warrior monk called Han-Chin. Thereafter she is compelled to hunt down the evil descendants of those who Han-Chin had placed a curse on, and stare at them while her eyes glow red and they start screaming and tearing at their faces – a condition the viewer will soon be familiar with.

Enter ex-moine Vincent, and his combat buddy Major Joe Holmes (*FULL METAL JACKET*'s R. Lee Ermy) who are out to get the goods on a local crime lord. After much chasing around in rickety old trucks and a few visits to the local nightspots for macho punch-ups, Vincent finds himself suspended above a mirror by a sweaty-faced baddie who's having trouble matching his dialogue to his lip movements. Will our homely hero get turned into

a ham-burger or will Nancy get there in the nick of time with her sizzling snare? Imagine the climax of *RAIDERS* on a 50 pence special effects budget and you have your answer. The narrative is not what you would call tightly knit – in fact the makers could have done with an entirely new pattern and set of needles! It's not entirely lacking in entertainment value though. The shoot-outs are a particular treat, with bullet hits that spark like kiddie firecrackers. And if you want memorable dialogue, check out the scene where the thoroughly despicable bad guy tells his brain-dead henchmen to keep a close eye on Vincent. I want him watched, he hisses. "And when the time is right I want his nuts cut off. They have some strange customs in Manila."

Certificate 18. Running Time: 90 minutes.
A.B.

SALUTE OF THE JUGGER Virgin Video

Just when it seemed as if the craze for MAD MAX style post-apocalyptic actioners was abating, along comes this fairly interesting example of the genre. It stars the ubiquitous Rutter Hauer as Sallow, the crewcut leader of a motley band who drift around the bleak desert landscape making their living from a brutal gladiatorial sport known as Jugging. This is like a bargain basement *Rollerball* though it might more appropriately be called *mugging* – the object of the game being to commit severe and lasting G&H on your opponent. Expect to see it on Channel 4 shortly.

Like Mad Max, Rutter is a man with a past (and a personal hygiene problem). He was once a top player in the Jugging league until an indiscreet kolon with the wife of Somebody Important got him kicked out of polite society. Now he tumbles from punch-up to punch-up, looking for a chance to get his own back which



comes when he and his merry band stumble across slender, bimboish Joan Chen – a gal who moves like lightning and isn't shy of biting people's ears off when aroused. Joan agrees to join their group, and the scene is then set for a raucous, very brutal battle between Rutter's hoodlums and the Establishment team led by his old enemy Popcorn anybody?

It's not surprising to find this one heading straight for the video racks. It's aimed squarely at the thud and blunder crowd, who will certainly get their money's worth out of the non-stop action and violence. The look of the film is suitably sleazy and gritty, and the characters never use words when a grunt will do. Director David Peoples choreographs the bone-crunching game scenes well, but his script comes up way short on characterization and is strangely lacking in the ironic humour that Hauer has been an integral part of. Rutter Hauer's screen persona. Not bad of its kind, but hardly pure genius.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 100 minutes.
R.M.



HOMeward BOUND

If it had been summertime it wouldn't have been quite so bad. At least then it would still have been light when he locked up the shop at 6:45 and set off home. But it wasn't summer; it was rusty autumn, and David Jessel couldn't shake off the feeling that he was being watched.

He pulled the shop door closed and fumbled with the big bunch of keys that he kept inside his overcoat pocket. There were four locks in all, and Jessel looked round nervously as he secured each in turn, half expecting a rush of bodies from a nearby side street. Once or twice he had noticed the skinheads who hung around the park railings watching him; he was sure they were planning something.

But it wasn't the skinheads who worried him particularly. Their stares were hostile, certainly, but at least theirs was a tangible threat, something he had learned to live with. No, it was the unknown threat that disturbed Jessel: the feeling that he was being calmly observed by something that was cold, intelligent... inhuman. He shook his head and told himself for the fifth time that was not to be ridiculous. How on earth had he latched onto this idea in the first place? It was simply overwork. A weekend in front of the fire and the telly would do him the world of good. By Monday morning it would all be forgotten.

He walked quickly across the street. Everywhere was blue and black, the pavements and roads soaked in a depressing orange light. The moon glimmered faintly overhead, a dirty chazy yellow as though it hadn't been cleaned for weeks.

Jessel walked along the pavement by the side of the park. The railings whopped by, one after another, caging the looming trees and bushes. He sensed something there in the bushes, keeping pace with him. He stopped and looked down in his left, nervous of what he might see. There was nothing. He began to walk forward

slowly watching the bushes all the time. A vague shape, dark and orange, was trailing him. He felt relieved. It was only his shadow, and the shifting emphasis of the street lamps on the leaves.

He heard scuttering footsteps behind him and whistled around. It was a playing card, the six of hearts, ticking as it cartwheeled over the pavement. He smiled uselessly; how stupid to think the sound resembled footsteps. As the card reached him he stamped on it, flattening it into immobility. There, he thought with satisfaction; now, no more silliness.

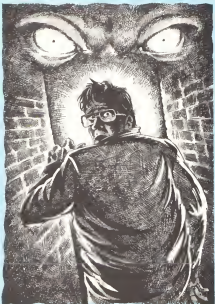
He walked on, looking straight ahead, trying to turn his thoughts to brighter things. He thought of his little house, modest but cosy. In ten minutes he would be there. He would go in, hang up his coat as he always did, put on the fire and the telly and make himself a meal. Then, when he had eaten, he would settle down

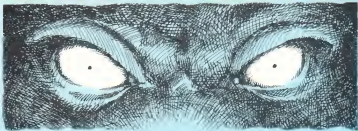
for the evening with two bottles of Guinness and a bag of salted peanuts. Absoluta bliss! What more could a man ask for?

He quickened his pace, anxious to get home now. His heart beat faster as he turned the corner by the park. This was the bit he didn't like. He had to walk down these two streets where some of those skinheads lived and then through an alleyway. After that it was plain sailing. The streets broadened out and became brighter, and there were usually people around; respectable people, not yobboes.

He looked at his watch as he always did at this point, and reassured himself with the thought that in three minutes from now he would be out of the danger zone and nearly home. He sat off, passing a little row of run-down, boarded-up shops. There were three in all, the paintwork peeling from their faded signs, their grimy-thickened windows protected from vandals by rusty wire mesh. As he passed the last one, Jessel started.

He looked back and his stomach did a forward roll. A gray, bloated face was peering at him from be-





hind the glass! He walked back slowly, his legs trembling. The face didn't move.

Maybe it wasn't a face after all; maybe it was just his eyes playing tricks, conjuring the layers of dust into shapes. It was too dark and grimy to see properly. As he leaned forward for a closer look, the face melted away, back into the darkness.

Jessel turned and ran. The keys jangled in his pocket, his feet clacked alarmingly loudly on the pavement as though he were wearing tap shoes. At the end of the street, he stopped and bent double, a stitch jabbing his side. His breathing was harsh and laboured, squeezing out as a thin white vapour which curled for a moment and then dissolved in the sodium glare of the street-lamps.

He forced himself to calm down. His body felt drenched with sweat beneath his heavy overcoat. Maybe he should have kept running. Up the next street, up the alleyway, his feet pumping blindly. That way he would be home in two minutes.

But no, he thought, that wasn't the way. Why should he run? There was nothing - nothing - to be afraid of. Running was undignified and unnecessary, and if anything he would only draw attention to himself. But still his legs itched to run.

He compromised. He walked swiftly, arms swinging by his side. He set his face sternly, and jumped only a little when loose pages from a newspaper wheeled madly across the street in front of him and wrapped themselves around a lamp post. Somewhere in the distance he heard people shouting, and then start up with the drunken chorus of a football song. This was followed by the muted crash of breaking glass and a ragged bout of cheering.

Jessel almost fainted when a black, glistening hand lunged from beneath a car and flopped onto his foot. He whipped his foot back, the scream catching in his throat, sharp as a fishbone. He looked down.

It was a dustbin liner. It sifted around the wheel of the car and mouthed at him mockingly. Jessel kicked out at it and walked on. His body felt stiff and unnatural, not part of him at all.

Now he came to the alleyway; the dreaded, hated alleyway. He stopped and peered down at it. It stretched ahead like a long, black throat, containing so many hiding places. The walls on either side seemed to be pressing closer than ever, as though the two buildings had uprooted themselves in the night and edged together, leaving only the narrowest of passageways. He stared down cautiously. There was a sickly smell, as though everything had turned wet and rotten. His heart began to thud - *ba-thum, ba-thum, ba-thum* - like a warning.

More black bin liners, bulky with sinister shapes, lolled against the walls, grouped together as though in some dark

conversation. Up ahead something glinted. A knife? No, it was a broken padlock dangling on a chain, flickering as it reflected the dull, sulphurous glow of the caged light overhead.

Jessel hurried on. The ground was slippery and littered with rubbish. Crisp bags crinkled feebly; broken glass glittered like precious stones; pulpy shapes collected in corners made him shudder and look away.

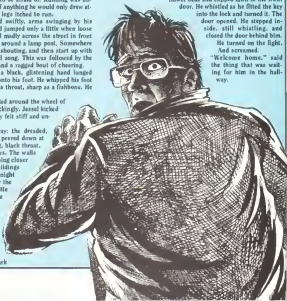
He was halfway along now. He passed a doorway set back in the wall, flanked by dustbins. Someone was standing in the doorway, watching him. He turned. There was no-one there. Only the elongated shadow of a dustbin.

Thirty seconds later and he was out. Home and dry, his heart seemed to sing, home, home and dry. He hurried along the tree-lined road to his own little house at the end. The streetlights beamed at him, lighting his way. More light came from being lace curtains. His own house was in darkness, but it was a haven. Soon it would be as bright as its neighbour.

He walked up his driveway, past the meticulously cared-for flower beds and clipped lawn to the front door. He whistled as he fitted the key into the lock and turned it. The door opened. He stepped inside, still whistling, and closed the door behind him.

He turned on the light. And screamed.

"Welcome home," said the thing that was waiting for him in the hallway.





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DIARY OF A

becoming much sought after for his airbrushed scenes of warfare, featuring aircraft, ships and submarines. But it was his starships that brought him an international reputation, especially with the publication of his first

collection 21ST CENTURY FOSS. His versatility is also shown in the line drawings he provided for the bestselling JOY OF SEX, and his work is now also in great demand for the cinema - where it has been seen in such sci-fi hits as ALIEN.



SPACEPERSON

The images depicted here are just some of the startling full colour illustrations to be found in **DIARY OF A SPACEPERSON**, published this month by Dragon's World and Paper Tiger Books at £16.95. This tells of the

eratic adventures of a spacewoman from the distant future as she journeys through the galaxies and capers from planet to planet, encountering an odd assortment of truly bizarre alien beings. The patent results of her

fratics are described and illustrated in this forthright diary, which makes **STAR TREK's** Captain's Log look like pretty boring reading by comparison! Fascinating stuff...

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Animator and preview
of Bride of Re-
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plus showcase of
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THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

READERSHIP SURVEY TEN COPIES OF WITCH STORY MUST BE WON!

Now that we have been sending shivers down your spine for four issues, we thought it was about time we found out a bit more about you rabid readers out there. This information will help make THE DARK SIDE even better than it already is - hard to believe we know! Fill in the questionnaire double quick and you will stand a fair chance of winning a copy of MEDUSA VIDEO's great supernatural horror hit, WITCH STORY.

1. WHAT AGE ARE YOU?

- UNDER 16 YRS ☐
 16-19 YRS ☐
 20-24 YRS ☐
 25-35 YRS ☐
 OVER 35 YRS ☐

2. WHICH SEX?

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3. MARITAL STATUS

- SINGLE ☐
 MARRIED ☐

4. INTO WHAT INCOME BRACKET DO YOU FALL?

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 10,001 - 12,500 ☐
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 15,501 or more ☐

5. WHAT KIND OF ACCOMMODATION DO YOU HAVE?

- OWN ☐
 RENTED ☐
 LIVE WITH FAMILY ☐

6. HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE DARK SIDE?

- FROM AN ADVERTISEMENT ☐
 IN WHICH PUBLICATION ☐

7. FROM A RADIO COMMERCIAL ON WHICH STATION

8. FROM BROWSING IN A NEWSAGENT

9. RECOMMENDATION OF A FRIEND

10. HOW DID YOU OBTAIN YOUR COPY OF THE DARK SIDE?

- SUBSCRIPTION ☐
 NEWSAGENT ☐
 DELIVERY ☐
 HIGH STREET ☐
 NEWSAGENT eg ☐
 W.H Smiths ☐

11. OTHER eg. Comic or novelty shops

12. BESIDES YOURSELF, HOW MANY OTHER PEOPLE READ THE DARK SIDE?

9. TICK BELOW IF YOU REGULARLY BUY/READ
 2000 AD ☐
 FEAR ☐
 SKELETON CREW ☐
 KERRANG! ☐
 GAMESMASTER ☐
 INTERNATIONAL ☐

13. HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND PER YEAR ON THE SORT OF PRODUCTS FEATURED IN THE DARK SIDE?

- £10 OR LESS ☐
 £10 - £50 ☐
 £50 - £100 ☐
 more than £100 ☐

14. DO YOU OWN A PERSONAL COMPUTER? YES WHAT TYPE? NO

15. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OR LESS OF IN THE DARK SIDE?

- | | MORE | SAME | LESS |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| VIDEO REVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FILM REVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BOOK REVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| COMPUTER GAMES | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FICTION | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (SHORT STORIES) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FEATURES | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| STAR INTERVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| NEWS & GOSSIP | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ROLE PLAYING | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| THEATRICAL REVIEWS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16. WHICH VIDEO COMPANY IS YOUR FIRST CHOICE FOR HORROR FILMS?

- MEDUSA ☐
 CBS/FOX ☐
 CIC ☐
 BCB ☐
 PALACE ☐
 MGM/UA ☐
 OTHER ☐

17. IF YES - DO YOU BUY SOFTWARE COMPUTER GAMES?

- FREQUENTLY ☐
 OFTEN ☐
 OCCASIONALLY ☐
 NEVER ☐

18. WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC DO YOU MOST LISTEN TO?

- POP MUSIC ☐
 DANCE MUSIC ☐
 JAZZ ☐
 HEAVY METAL ☐
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19. IF YOU DO NOT OBTAIN YOUR COPY BY SUBSCRIPTION, IS IT DUE TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING?

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POST MORTEM

If you have something you want to get off your chest, don't be afraid to scream at us about it. Send your bouquets or brickbats to Post Mortem, The Dark Side, Panini House, 116-120 Goswell Road, London EC1 7QD

Dear Allen,
I'd like to wish you good luck with the magazine; I'm always delighted to see another genre magazine appear. I think you've chosen an interesting time to launch your mag, what with **FEAR** and **SKELETON CREW** adorning the bookshelves; but from the number of magazines I've seen in my local newsagent, I'd say your distribution people have already got their act together nicely - so half the battle is won.

As for the first issue, I enjoyed the Clive Barker interview immensely. I was glad to read that he feels a particular leaning towards writing, as I think that's where his strongest talent lies; that's not to say that (like most) Barker hasn't produced his fair share of crap, but fortunately the good far outweighs the bad. I also liked the idea of covering computer software; the other mags have snubbed out on this, which is surprising. Best of luck in the future.
Rick Casper,
Bromfield, Beds.



Dear Editor,
I recently bought **THE DARK SIDE** from my local newsagent and am pleased to say that I think it's pretty good. What I find most refreshing about it is the broad coverage of connected areas which either may regard as 'aside' from mainstream horror (e.g. computer games and comics). There is, naturally, much for improvement, but the first issue shows great promise. It also comes across as a 'fun' read, suggesting that the horror field as a general should not be taken TOO seriously. I look forward to further issues with interest.
P. Robinson,
Richmond, North Yorkshire.

Dear Mr Byrne,
Having just read the first issue of your new magazine I was very pleased with its glossy layout and content. I believe there is room in the genre for more such publications, unlike the editors of your competition, judging by one editorial I have read - could it be they are afraid of the competition? Anyway, I hope your excellent start is upheld and you don't disappear after a couple of issues. I know this is in the hands of the publisher and will be doing my best to spread the good word.

Thanks Mortem and don't worry we intend to be around for a while



Dear Mr Byrne,
Reference to Joe Abbott's **OUTER LIMITS** article (Part 1) as published on pp. 16-19 of **THE DARK SIDE** 1 (Oct 86): As most of the biographical information about the show's producers and the various questions therein derive directly from my work - either my book on the series (**THE OUTER LIMITS - THE OFFICIAL COMPANION**) or my earlier series of articles in **TRILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE**, it would be nice to receive some of the credit, or at least an acknowledgement in print, since Part 1 in its published form (and, presumably, future instalments of similar depth) would not be possible were there not my own work to draw from. At any rate, I hope this clarification is not intrusive, and I would enjoy seeing future instalments of the piece in **THE DARK SIDE**, as well as any related **OUTER LIMITS** references or material from the **LK**. I know several of your other contributors, am glad to see a new genre magazine, and wish

you the best with it.
David A. Schum,
Los Angeles, California, USA.
Joe Abbott replies: 'Except, here is an damaged by the unfortunate sequence of events that resulted in the absence of my recommendation of your invaluable reference work in issue 1. Severe space limitations resulted in the episode guide being held over to issue 2, and several paragraphs (most of from other sources) were unavoidably pushed out, leaving the reviewing list rather heavily (but not exclusively) reliant on your detailed biography. Regular readers of my work over the last eight years will know it is on published record that I always credit a reference source used extensively (ironically, numerous references to Dave and Jeff's work all appeared in the second half of the feature). In sending you copies of **LK** cuttings from my extensive files, including on **Outer Limits** piece of mine published back in '85, that of there's anything there not already in your book - I'll say it.'



Dear Sir,
I recently purchased the first issue of **THE DARK SIDE** and found it to be a good read; some good articles and a chance to win a copy of **BASKET CASE 2**. However, one week later and I'm not so sure about the competition, for in that time I have tried to enter said competition 3 times, but the question merely repeats itself: Is there any other way to enter this competition? I was looking forward to a chance to win this book!

Sorry about the problems, please leave Jeffery. There were a few looking in with our horror feature, but hopefully they have now been sorted out. In future you will also have the option of sending your entry in on a postcard! The winners of the first issue's competition (and will have all had their prizes by now, but here's a list of their names just for the record).



THE QUATERMASS STORY

Professor Bernard Quatermass was the UK's most famous rocket scientist back in the days when the most powerful rocket this country possessed could be launched by lighting the blue touch paper! Richard Marshall meets the man who created him, author and screenwriter Nigel Kneale.



Above: Brian Donlevy as Quatermass. Below: Astronaut Richard Wordsworth about to become 'The Creeping Unknown'



Back in the 1950s a strange phenomenon swept Britain. It was a mass outbreak of what could be termed Quatermass-fever and it afflicted at least a third of the population, who stayed glued to the telly every week to thrill to Nigel Kneale's landmark trio of science-fiction horror serials chronicling the adventures of two-fisted rocket scientist Professor Bernard Quatermass. Can there be anyone in this country over the age of thirty who doesn't remember them? I certainly do - I got a rocket myself when my parents caught me sneaking back downstairs to watch QUATERMASS AND THE PIT through the keyhole of the living room door!

Professor Q has long hung up his Bunsen burner, but Nigel Kneale is still peddling television chills at the age of 66. Last Christmas he was responsible for adapting the spooky ghost story, THE

WOMAN IN BLACK, for the small screen. A highly respected dramatist who also numbers among his credits the screenplay for the film version of LOOK BACK IN ANGER and THE ENTERTAINER, Kneale started his writing career as 'general dogbody' at the BBC in the early 50s and came up with the first Quatermass story at very short notice to fill an unexpected gap in the schedule.

'It was a rush job,' he told me from his home in the leafy suburb of Barnes. 'They didn't even bother to ask what the show was about before we went into production. In fact I hadn't even finished writing it before it started transmitting - I think I'd written four out of six, and had to complete the last two while the rest were going out.'

He didn't have to think too hard to come up with a name for his scientist hero. 'I come from the Isle of Man, where a lot of the names begin with "Qu", and so I thought I'd just remind myself of a few. I looked in the London telephone directory and found this odd Quatermass name, so I used that. In fact, I later found out that the name belonged to a family of London fruit vendors. I know that because one of them wrote to me to say he was fed up with his customers calling him professor!'

The first show was THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT, with Kneale's boffin hero having to deal with an astronaut who has returned from space as something less than human. It was a modestly-budgeted affair, so it was also down to Kneale to help out with the special effects! 'We had to have a monster thing at the end which inhabited Westminster Abbey. So what happened was the somebody went down and bought a guide book to the place and blew up one of the photographs and cut a couple of holes in it. Then I stuck my hands through, which were draped with rubber gloves and various bits and pieces, and waggled them about. It looked very good, actually, surprisingly effective. I think the fellows who spend millions and millions of dollars on special effects sometimes overdo it.'

THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT turned out to be a huge success, and so were its sequels, QUATERMASS II and



QUATERMASS AND THE PIT. The three Quatermass shows were later made into hit movies by Hammer Films, and in fact it was the overseas success of **THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT** (1956 - **THE CREEPING UNKNOWN** for the Stateside market) that launched the studio into the lucrative horror field.

Even so, the author much prefers the TV originals. 'I didn't like the film of **THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT** very much,' he explained, 'because I was not invited to participate. They bought the script and went ahead and did it themselves. The whole thing was angled at the Americans. You see, the only way Hammer could sell

at the results that when Hammer came knocking on his door for the rights to film **QUATERMASS AND THE PIT**, he turned them down flat, only relenting ten years later when they agreed to let him write the screenplay.

The resultant movie (called **FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH** in America) detailed the discovery of an alien spaceship in a London construction site, and the subsequent mayhem when its mummified Martian crew came to life. 'It was a splendid production,' says Kneale. 'They did it in colour and in a big studio, the old MGM studio in Elstree. They also hired a very good actor named Andrew Kier to play Quatermass and he did it very well indeed. The one problem with the film was that they didn't have the sort of special effects



The transformation begins in 'The Quatermass Experiment'

you have in Hollywood nowadays. The effects for the film were better than the effects we had in the television show - but only just!

Kneale's illustrious scientist made his final appearance in the guise of John Mills, battling a death-beam from space in **THE**



anything to America was to have an American star and an American writer involved. The trouble is they were stuck with old Brian Donlevy as Quatermass. He was hitting the bottle rather heavily at the time and frankly wasn't interested in the part at all.'

Donlevy also featured in the film version of **QUATERMASS II** (known in the US as **ENEMY FROM SPACE**), which had Quatermass taking on brutal alien invaders who lived in vast acid vats and ate pulped people for lunch. This was again made with only minimal participation from Kneale, and the author was so displeased

A victim of the 'Enemy From Space'



QUATERMASS CONCLUSION, a fairly lavish ITV production aired in the late 70s. I mentioned that I thought this to be the least absorbing of the series, and Kneale readily agreed. 'I was disappointed in that too, for a variety of reasons that are hard to pin down. It all seemed a little bit flat. Maybe the basic idea wasn't original and interesting enough, in which case that's my fault. I think part of the trouble was that they wanted it two ways. They wanted a four-part, four hour TV series, and they also wanted to be able to cut it down to film length of an hour and 45 minutes. So I tried my best to make it both ways. But you couldn't really follow the ramifications of the plot. One version was too long, and the other was too short.'

Kneale's many other credits in the science-fiction and horror genres include a stylish chiller series called BEASTS, the screenplay for the 1964 movie of FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, and THE ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN OF THE HIMALAYAS. In the early 80s he went to the States to work for John Landis on a screenplay for a proposed remake of THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON. This didn't come off, but while he was there he met up with famed fantasy directors Joe Dante and John Carpenter, who were planning to collaborate on HALLOWEEN 3.

end wanted Kneale, who, they had long admired, to write the script.

Richard Wurdsworth tunes his transistor



A scene the censor removed from QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

'I was quite keen on doing that,' said Kneale. 'Particularly as they wanted me to take the series away from its slasher movie origins. So I thought up a story and we had a conference, and I went off to write the full script. In the meantime Joe had to pull out because he had something else on. In the end Oino De Laurentiis, who was in charge of all the money said that it must look exactly like the other two, so Carpenter simply took the script away and ripped it to bits, and I had nothing more to do with it.'

This understandably didn't endear Carpenter to Kneale. 'He's a talented filmmaker but a very strange man,' sighed the author. 'He did this odd thing and used the pseudonym of "Mertin Quatermass" on his film, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, which caused some critics to assume I had collaborated on the screenplay. In fact I've

never seen the picture and had nothing to do with the wretched thing. I have heard that it's not very good, and the only interesting thing

about it is its special effects, which sounds like a familiar story.'

The final question that has to be asked is: Will Quatermass ever be coming back? 'Certainly not!' says Kneale firmly. 'I blew him up at the end of THE QUATERMASS CONCLUSION and I don't feel inclined to invent a SON OF QUATERMASS either.'



Scenes from The Quatermass Experiment

Frankly, I don't think nowadays that the horror and science-fiction genres are a writer's medium any more. The people who make these things seem to think that any old scribble will do for a storyline as long as the effects are good, which to my mind is very sad. It's like building a house and saying: 'It will all hold together when the wallpaper goes on...'

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Let's have big hand for our resident witch, Hadria Hemlock, who is here again to stir her crazy cauldron and guide you into another nightmare year. She needs a big (severed) hand for her rabid recipe...



horrorScope



CAPRICORN
22nd Dec - 20th Jan

You're feeling better this month than you have in ages. Dorian, and you'll be spending more than ever—dig those new black chokers in the January issue! Don't wonder if though—because your guide can't be returned when your credit runs out at the blood bank.



AQUARIUS
21st Jan - 17th Feb

This is a month for looking up somewhere out of sight and out of mind with your next Lost Laces—especially from the 17th when you could be full of your (or sport). A meeting with someone at the full moon on the 28th could lead to a long-term association (beneficial) to both—just like in THE INVISIBLE TWO-HEADED TRANSPLANT!



PISCES
19th Feb - 20th Mar

Health could be a problem later in the month, so take it easy and get your feet up—however many you possess. Most problems start the 5th. Good day for signing contracts: the 26th. Follow your dreams this month and they may come true, but remember to keep away from Elio's hand.



ARIES
21st April - 21st May

Wishes on the first of the year is a good time for starting something new. From the middle of January you could see the first opportunity to take a trip from your 'Tummy Shirts' and keep well wrapped up. Be prepared to take a few risks this month—they will pay off handsomely.



Taurus
21st May - 21st May

Overseeing during the festive season could cause health problems—so all you cashiers go easy on that minimum wage. Naturally, when you're offered a loan, don't take on one and a half as well. On the 18th you find yourself in need of a friend, and on the 21st you find yourself full of it with them.



GEMINI
22nd May - 21st June

You start the month confused and blind, with a brain as accurate as the one that the basketball dropped on his way back to Freshwater's lab. But after the 2nd you begin to break new ground in the cemetery! This is a great month for imagination and the totally unexpected.



CANCER
22nd June - 22nd July

Your inner demon breaks out on the 7th and 22nd (mostly days when you'll be seeing company that Godwin with backfired). Exorcism is vital on the 5th and 20th. Postscript: take up most of the second part of the month, and you will find unexpected good fortune at the full moon on the 28th—perhaps someone will have dressed some other better!



LEO
24th Aug - 23rd Sept

An idea that comes to you on the 25th could become a serious obsession at the same time on the 13th. Don't take any action for at least a month—the stakes are too high. Towards the end of the month your guide could take a bettering—so stay away from the fish and chip shop!



VIRGO
24th Aug - 23rd Sept

Don't say anything at all before the 1st—you could well get caught up in a very tangled web if you do. Also, it's not advisable to make promises you know you won't be able to keep. Children arrive on the 1st and part of the month—could you be taking a weekend break in THE VILLAGE OF THE DANCE?



LIBRA
24th Sept - 23rd Oct

Something, or some thing could turn your house into a nightmare this month. There's a lot going on, but try to remember as much as possible in the first half of the month. Bonds could get in the way afterwards. Be very careful and in weeks 11 and 12 the 12th—particularly if you live anywhere near Camp Crystal Lake.



SCORPIO
24th Oct - 22nd Nov

That very early before you have been anything will finally get written this month. Energy levels will be high on the 19th, making it a good time for digging up old mistakes—this time don't forget to take a blood with you...



SAGITTARIUS
23rd Nov - 21st Dec

You're bound to overstep this month, but try not to make the damage and don't get involved with group activities that could drain your resources even further. The end of the month brings a feeling of great relief—in your back manager.



COMING NEXT MONTH!



February is the month that Dracula drinks the least amount of blood (think about it...) It's also the cover date of our most fright-packed issue to date. Yea, with this one we're offering a special DARK SIDE guarantee that if you're not scared to death then your life will be refunded! The terror begins with a trip into the

nightmare world of horror roleplaying—H.P. Lovecraft style, and continues with a far-from-boring chat with the notorious DRILLER KILLER himself, director Abel Ferrara, who will be handing out some helpful hints on the art of DIY brain surgery. Then you have the right to remain silent while we present our exclusive behind-the-scenes report on the filming of MANIAC COP 2. Sexy bloodsucker Ingrid Pitt is sure to drive you batty as the star of our HAMMER GLAMOUR spot, and our ongoing coverage of the Italian horror scene continues with a rare up-to-date interview with zombie king Lucio Fulci. Oh, and you mustn't miss part two of our horror filmmakers competition, plus a detailed episode guide to the classic 60's SF show, VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA. We'd like to tell you what else we have in store, but to be honest, we're too frightened to talk about it at the moment. Just get your bicycle clips on and be at your local newsagents on January 25—we don't want to have to come looking for you!





INEMACABRE

David Cox reviews Steven Spielberg's latest production a creepy-crawly "Thrill-omedy".

ARACHNOPHOBIA

Starring: Jeff Daniels, Marley Jane Kohn, Julian Sands, John Goodman.

Directed by: Frank Marshall.
Distributed by: Marmar Bros. PC.

The most refreshing thing about *ARACHNOPHOBIA* is its unapologetic, straightforward stance. While films such as *Flashdance* and the forthcoming *Jacob's Ladder* have hijacked basic horror plot lines and then emasculated them for their own commercial needs, first-time director Frank Marshall, along with executive producer Steven Spielberg, have made a good old-fashioned splatter-sucker ride of suspense and terror and there's not a shred of it. Despite its PC credentials, which may deter hardened fans stranded on *Fanspace*, it's one of the bluntest out-and-out 'hoor' movies to clutter our way in a long, long while.

It's always nice to see the genre treated with respect and *ARACHNOPHOBIA*, which could have languished in B-movie territory due to its age-old, tacky-sounding killer spider plot, has a sometimes 'major movie' feel to it that *Brainwashed* has been denied for too long. From its glorious opening helicopter shot of the Venezuelan jungle where world-class entomologist Julian Sands first discovers a previously breed of unsavory spider to the scary suburbs where the



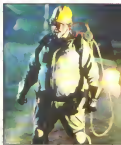
critter makes his home in Jeff Daniels' home, Marshall's debut has exactly the look of professional Spielbergian when one would expect from the producer of, amongst others, *E.T.* and the *Indiana Jones* films. Indeed, the Spielberg comparisons don't end there. *ARACHNOPHOBIA*, even at such a late date, delivers the egg of death that other *Jaws* rip-offs such as *Gremlins* and *Qubo - Killer Whale* failed to deliver in the immediate wake of the 1975 hit. Character wise, the aspects of *Jaws* surfaces again with the two-charming Daniels playing the resourceful, family man here,

bolting valiantly against small-town small-mindedness who refuses to believe in the threat these eight-legged assassins pose... Julian Sands and John Goodman (read: Richard Dreyfuss and Robert Shaw) are the creative specialist and enigmatic exterminator character respectively.

If *ARACHNOPHOBIA* never quite lives up to the shocker that it emulates, it certainly has a stern good try. Perhaps spiders, despite the high phobia rate amongst the general public, are simply too small and squishable to make really effective screen monsters. However,

Marshall does his best to keep the jumps coming from all angles (a jump of about eight arachnids and the bumbling, Marmar spider should have you screaming with equal measures of fright and delight). Where he comes a little unstuck is in his over-reliance on tongue-in-cheek comedy which dissipates the tension just as it threatens to build to a pitch of welcome intensity. A creepy shower scene, for example, that could have been one of the best since 'you-know-what', is marred by a humorous demerol that trivialises the effective art-ap.

Still, we should be thankful that Marshall and co. opted to play it fair and square with a horror audience that by now must be getting increasingly irritated by the treatment at the hands of the Hollywood studios. British distributors Warner Bros. should have their wrists slapped for their 'not a horror film about killer spiders at all, really' approach. Is horror as a genre really thought of as an out of fashion? It's only down to the lack of quality films like *ARACHNOPHOBIA* that this situation could have developed in the first place so do something about it - go see this movie at least twice and show the major studios that you want to be scared, you like to be scared and that, above all you're proud to be scared. Make *ARACHNOPHOBIA* a big hit and we may get lucky - we may end up with a lot more like it.





COMIC Crypt

As *Revolver* bites the bullet, Alan McKenzie looks at the short but auspicious career of one of the UK's most controversial adult comics

The Big News this month is that Fleetway Publications, parent company of the 2000 AD group of Comics, has cancelled *Revolver*, the company's second and latest "Comix for Mature Readers".

The reason given was "disappointing sales" and the last issue of *Revolver* will be Number 7.

As this is a more serious setback to the developing market of comics for adults than you might imagine, I want to spend the greater part of this column talking about *Revolver* and trying to explain some of the whys.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

Revolver started out as the original title for Fleetway's other adult comics. Editor Steve MacManus floated the name during the early conception stages of what became *Cross*. The Management at Fleetway then owned by the publishing giant IPC, didn't like the title, so *Cross* it was. That the editorial folk at Fleetway disagreed wholeheartedly is reflected by MacManus' proposal of *Revolver* as a title to the new Maxwell management, who took over from Fleetway. This time the title was given the nod and then *Cross* deputy editor, Peter Hogan, was detached from regular duty to initiate development work on the fledgling project.

Hogan is a man with extensive experience in book editorial - he edited the second edition of my unofficial biography of Harrison Ford for Zenith Books. He's also seen service in the trenches as a music journalist and a freelance writer. The theme he came up with for *Revolver* was kind of retro-futies feel, a trend which seemed to be at the cutting edge of in-the-know



poetry culture

Using this as a springboard, a strip loosely based on the life story of Jimi Hendrix went into development, written by legendary Rock Journalist Charles Shaar Murray. Although he hasn't actually scripted much at the comics ven before,

anyone who's been

IMPROVEMENT IMPLIES DISSATISFACTION WITH A LESSER STATE THUS THERE IS A COMPARISON COMPARISON IMPLIES CHOICE AND CHOICE BREEDS CONFLICT. A FREE MAN HAS NO NEED FOR CHOICE THUS HE WILL NEVER FEEL THE GROOM TO IMPROVE

around

comics for a few years will also remember that Charlie hosted several "Evenings With Stan Lee" at Camden's Roundhouse in the mid-Seventies. Besides, he's just written a fairly successful and well received book about Jimi Hendrix, so he seemed perfectly placed to take on scripting "Purple Haze", as the *Revolver* strip was called. The result was such a startlingly different approach to presenting a story in a comics format, that it may have seemed difficult to follow from first time through. But then *Revolver* wasn't a comic for those who liked to see super-powered people smashing through walls.





Perhaps the most important reason why "Dan Dare" was so successful was the first issue, which was a real "smash" (a term that is still used to describe a big success). The first issue was a real "smash" (a term that is still used to describe a big success). The first issue was a real "smash" (a term that is still used to describe a big success).

Another bold move by Hogan was to get Paul Nary, whose famous *Electric Blue* was the main artist on Marvel Comics' *Avengers* 13, to do a winter on *Hyperstate* and *Horror*. Steve Parkhouse, better known to fans as the writer of Marvel Comics' *Dollar* 110, stepped in which I was the editor was selected as the artist and thus was born a kind of never-ending story. The result was even more strange than *Requiem* Saga which Parkhouse draws from. (See Moore's 1989)

The fourth step was a discussion between established partners Peter Wigan and Brendan McCarthy. Wigan had more successful series for 2009: 40 Weekly solved, two including the highly successful *Bad Company*, along with *Sooner or Later* (also with McCarthy), *Box Bar*



and more recently *Heavenly Creatures*. Miligan has also scripted a few Batman stories for DC Comics in the U.S. and has a few cracking issues in his revival of the old Steve Ditko character *Shade the Changing Man* under his moniker, bde. Brendan McCarthy, but contributed his art to many of the most memorable *Judge Dredd* stories but had largely dropped out of comics to concentrate on the more lucrative field of movie storyboarding and production design. The fruits of their artists' tows was *Wagtail* Gosh: a completely bizarre offering billed as 'Karma Karma for Beginners' but nonetheless the work of two creators fired on all cylinders.

The last regular feature was "Dere Screens", a cartoon version of TV's *Man About the House* written and drawn by Julie Hollings, better known for her *Brenda the Bitch*, possibly the most experimental strip of all in that it would have been the story least likely to appeal to established comic readers.

With this lineup, Revolver was going to break down some pre-conceptions about where comics were coming from and where they were going.

GETTING IT OUT THERE

The thing is, there is more to making a comic succeed than merely getting together some of the best writers and artists in the business and giving them the space to create some truly original material. You have to get that material in front of the people who are eventually going to reap the publishers' investment. And the fields of promotion and distribution are lined with the corpses of magazines, both innovative and clichéd, who thought their creative efforts could stand alone.

The first alarm bells went off when the first report of Shershev was nowhere to be found in

London newspapers' agents in Guildford, the man with the PR plan for the 2000 AD Group, spent a day tripping round London newspapers at random in an effort to determine the scale of the damage. The results weren't encouraging. Eighty percent of shops contacted didn't carry Revolver. It was obvious that there had been a distribution snafu of epic proportions. When the dust settled, it became apparent that Revolver / had sold about 50% of its print run. Difficult for it to sell any more when so many copies didn't get any farther than a wheeler's warehouse.

WHY'S-WISE

The reasons for the failure of Revolution will never fully be known. It is all too easy to blame the editorial content, the inept distribution or a hasty management decision to cancel – or all three. If publishing folk truly understood why a magazine lost or dies, no magazine would ever be cancelled.

The closure of this tale does not imply a reversal of our overall strategy. We will continue to be very active in this area and, indeed, will shortly announcing major new initiatives."

But any one who cares anything about British cinema cannot help but mourn the loss. Let's hope it wasn't for nothing.



Dark Visions

'We have seen the future of horror, and it's name is...' Maitland McDonagh - with more murmurings of things to come!



SPIRITS RISE!

Things being what they are, the success of *Ghost* will no doubt mean a rash of love stories with supernatural overtones. First up: *The Butcher's Wife* (also from *Ghost*'s Paramount) which sounds like one of those Eastern European slices of dreary life, but is really a sort of modern day *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*. *Ghost* star Demi Moore has the title role; she's a Southern

psychic whose husband - yes, he's a butcher - moves their household to New York. New Yorkers being the neurotic bunch they are, many of her neighbours are seeking professional help from psychical Jeff Daniels (most recently another type of doctor in *Acrophobia*); the problem is that her advice is a hell of a lot more useful. The good doctor is understandably annoyed that is, until he falls in love with his rival

DEADLY DE NIRO

Also on the remake front (though not the supernatural one) Martin Scorsese is remaking Lee Thompson's spectacularly sleazy *Cape Fear* with Steven Spielberg producing. The original film revolves around goody-goody small town attorney (Gregory Peck) and stone psychia Max Cady (Robert Mitchum) whom he helped send to prison. When Cady a vicious sex offender is released he makes a bee-line for the counsel's small town home and ravages him with a barrage of oblique threats to abuse his wife and daughter. The

original *Cape Fear* holds up largely because of Mitchum's superbly evil, swaggering performance, and with longtime Scorsese collaborator Robert DeNiro recasting the pivotal role of Cady that hint seems secure. The play itself rests on a foundation of repressed sexual innuendo and spicily defined social role playing that will need considerable reworking to hold up today. *Cape Fear* is driven by the spectre of rampant sexuality as an unpredictably scary and degenerate, so unimaginably awful that the mere suggestion makes women weep and strong men shudder - that may be tough to pull off.



STRANGERS IN THE FRIGHT

Paul Schrader never one to pass up a subject with dark erotic potential is back on familiar ground with *The Comfort of Strangers*. A thriller written by Harold Pinter and set in Venice, the film revolves around a young

couple on a romantic holiday (Natascha Richardson and Rupert Everett) and the older couple (Helen Mirren and Christopher Walken) with whom they become involved. When half of that couple is the ever creepy Walken, you know trouble can't be far behind.

BEWITCHED AGAIN!

Writers Michael Graft and Mark Vizer - who brought us *Poleggers* and *Poleggers II* - are said to be working on a remake of René Clair's *I Married a Witch*. The 1942 original starred Veronica Lake as a witch burned at the stake in Salem, who comes

back centuries later to haunt the descendants of her puritan murderers. Graft synopsis notwithstanding, Clair's film was a romantic-comedy-fantasy, a genre mix requiring the lightest of touches. But the real question of the day is: is there a role for Zelma Rubinstein, Poleggers' dwarf psychic?

BIG NEWS FROM DISNEY

Weird Science revisited: 'Who cares about the grammar?' *Racey*, *I Shrink the Kids* was a big hit, and Disney wants a sequel. One idea under consideration: *Monkey, I Blew Up the Baby*. Not blew up as in exploded, but blew up as in made huge. Imagine the bodily function jokes.

Also, as Disney talk is flying about a sequel to the blockbuster *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* There was speculation that Roger would reappear as early as 1991, but Disney CEO Michael Eisner has been quoted saying that though the film is in the works, it will take longer than

that to get a rrrr meedies. Two Roger Rabbit shows - *Tummy Trouble*, *Racey*, *I Shrink the Kids* - companion piece and *Rabbitseason* Rabbit released with Dick Tracy. Disney already made it to the big screen, and there may be another feature canon as well as some television involvement before a full fledged Roger versus miscreants. Already on the drawing board: a sequel to 1977's *The Rescuers*. Bob Newhart and Eva Gabor will supply the voices of Bernard and Bianca, mouse special agents who continue their adventures in *The Rescuers Down Under*. Not surprisingly, the plotline takes place in Australia, where they protect an eagle from an unhinged poacher.



AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

The long-awaited *Godfather III* will make it into US theaters for Christmas, despite all the speculation that notorious productioner Francis Ford Coppola wasn't going to be able to deliver a cut in time. Collaborating with screenwriter Mario Puzo whose novel *The Godfather* started it all, Coppola made film

history with *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather Part II* (1974). Sixteen years later, he's got a tough act to follow. It's even tougher now, since *The Two Jakes* the sequel to *Chinatown* demonstrated eloquently and recently — just how wrong a belated sequel to a great film can go. *The Godfather Part III* opens in 1979, as aging debauch Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) takes the first step in

building the Corleone empire, converting their business to real estate, banking and Wall Street rather than casinos and other illegal operations. Gone but not forgotten the Corleones' criminal past resurfaces in the form of family Vincent Mancini (Andy Garcia), the illegitimate son of Michael's late brother Sonny. The

cast includes Diane Keaton (Kitty Corleone), Talia Shire (Connie Corleone), Brainerd Fonda (photographer Grace Hamilton), George Hamilton (cousin Vito), Harrison Eli Wallach (Don Altobello), Joe Mantegna (gangster Joey Zasa) and Coppola's daughter Sofia as Mary Corleone.



COMIC CAPERS

What with *Batman*, *Superman*, *Swamp Thing* and *The Punisher* making it big at the movies, it should come as no surprise that Capitan America is making his

bid for the big time. The World War II comic book hero will fight Nazi mutants for Columbia Pictures later this year, and the cast includes Danny Cox, Ned Beatty and Michael Nouri.

END OF THE ROCKY ROAD?

Rocky V, *Yes Rocky V*. *The First Bell*. Sylvester Stallone once observed that there was nothing left for Rocky Balboa to do except go into a room full of mirrors and punch himself out and he will be talking to himself (via the magic of split screen technology) to promote the latest Rocky sequel, at least in the States. The movies' real plot is less amusing: the boxer discovers he has permanent brain damage and agrees to train a younger fighter. John Avildsen directs again, and the cast includes Talia Shire, Burt Young and Stallone's son Sage, making



his acting debut. And is it really the final bell? Well, was *Friday the 13th Part IV: The Final Chapter* really the final chapter? Case closed.

FINAL CUTS

Vampires will have a big stake in the horror scene in 1991, with film versions planned of Anne Rice's *INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* (scripted by Michael Winters of *Conwick*, *Crisler*), Richard Christian Matheson's *RED SLEEP*, *Paranormal's NIGHTMARE*, *INNOCENT BLOOD*, and *BLUE BLOOD*, the latter written by John Black Ross's *Poison* (who is also working on the final draft of *ALIEN III*). On the fantasy

front, Steven Spielberg's next picture is likely to be an adaptation of Michael Crichton's *JURASSIC PARK*, which is about an amusement park where mechanical prehistoric creatures malfunction and go on a rampage — sounds like Crichton has revamped his *WESTWORLD* theme with dinosaurs. But the one we're waiting to see is *FLESH GORDON MEETS THE COSMIC CHEERLEADERS*, in which *Flesh* encounters some deadly out-ter-olds and King Dong.





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OPPORTUNITY SHOCKS



Have you ever finished watching a bad horror movie and said to yourself: 'I could do a LOT better than that!?' Well, we think you can as well, and we're giving you the chance to prove it with an exclusive DARK SIDE competition aimed at discovering the macabre moviemakers of tomorrow. In the first of a three-part feature, filmmaker Steve Shields gives you some tips on how to make a prize-winning monster movie.

Film directors are a pretty diverse bunch on the whole. But one thing that many of today's top professional directors have in common is the fact that they once started out making their own amateur movies on 8mm. Raimi, Carpenter, Landis, Wes Craven - the list goes on. And now **THE DARK SIDE** is giving you the chance to flex your creative muscles and win a brand new, top of the range Hitachi VMC1 'Twist and Shoot' camcorder. Watch out Spielberg!

Nine runners-up will receive substantial prizes as well, and there will be a special award for best makeup effects. The winning entry will also receive the supreme accolade of being screened at 1991's famed 'Shock Around The Clock' festival. Is this a scream come true or what?

As only a selected audience will be invited to view your efforts (none of whom will be expected to pay for the privilege) you can make your film as gory or explicit as you like without falling foul of the censors. And since the films will be unavailable to the public, copyright restrictions won't exist, which means you can mercilessly plunder anyone else's work for ideas. However do remember that if you choose to pilfer your plot from a successful movie, you're going to be hard pushed to recreate it successfully on the tiny budget you will have at your disposal. Better to start from scratch and create your own narrative.

That way you'll



The EVIL DEAD rise

impress us more, and you'll find it easier to convince a studio or production company that you are the person they need to direct their next big picture!

THE SCREAMPLAY'S THE THING

Once you've decided on your basic storyline you're going to have to turn it into a script. It is important to remember at this stage that there will inevitably be some things that are just impossible to film...even with an experienced crew and a budget of millions, corners have to be cut and compromises made.

Your script should not only include all the lines of dialogue that the performers will recite, but detailed descriptions of what each character will look like, location information, details about any props the characters will have to interact with and even, if necessary, climate requirements. It's no use putting: 'Tracy is sunbathing on the beach unaware of the shadowy figure who watches her from the sand dunes' if it's the middle of Winter and you happen to be shooting your film in Bedfordshire.

In fact, the locations you choose are crucially important for a number of reasons. On the one hand you need to select a place which evokes the right kind of atmosphere for the particular scene you're shooting - if it's an intimate tête-à-tête between your two leading characters, say, it would be unwise to decide on a noisy, crowded rush-hour tube train for the scene.

Perhaps a candle-lit restaurant would better suit the mood.

And on the other hand there would be little point in

visualising a scene outside the door of No. 10 Downing Street if, on the day, Mrs. Thatcher had endured a particularly grueling question time in The House and declined to allow you access to film there. Prior permission to film in such given location is essential before you finally decide to include it in your script - notoriously difficult locations to be given the green light for are churches, cemeteries (shame), public buildings, airports, department stores and Donald Sinden's bathroom.

HECTIC SCHEDULES

Now you've chosen all the locations you wish to use - and received permission to film there - written out your script, accumulated the various props and costumes and cast (bribed, threatened or press-ganged?) your actors, the next step is drawing up a shooting schedule.



HILLSOUND



THE EVIL DEAD



ZOMBIE BRIGADE

Unless you intend to edit your entire production 'in camera' (i.e. shoot each and every scene in sequence - which is unrealistic for many obvious reasons, but does cut out the editing stage if you can only get your hands on one VCR for example) it is imperative that you split the script into definite sections. Every film that is ever made follows a detailed shooting schedule because, as everyone knows, in the movie business time is money...and shooting schedules save a whole lot of both.

Organizing is the key to drawing up an accurate schedule. It isn't difficult but great care should be taken to ensure you don't leave anything out. The first thing to do is to go through your script with a fine tooth comb and decide precisely how many individual scenes you will need to shoot to make up the entire film, numbering them in chronological order as you go.

Obviously, if you have gone to all the trouble of securing permission to film in a particular location you're going to want to film every scrap of material that needs to be recorded there quickly and efficiently. If your film begins and ends in an old boiler room, say, like *A Nightmare On Elm Street* did, except Wes Craven had the resources to build his own so he didn't need permission! it would be pointless to lug all the equipment, cast, props etc. there on two separate occasions. That's where your schedule comes in.

Draw a line across the top of your note pad and make four columns down. The four columns should be headed: DATE &

TIME, SETS & SCENE NUMBERS, CAST AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS.

Now, say you've booked the boiler room of your local swimming pool between 10AM and 3PM on January 30th, and, by coincidence, have decided to make that date your first day of shooting, you can now fill those details into the top of the first column. In the second column write 'Local Swimming Pool' and the numbers of each scene you're going to need to film there (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 84 & 85 for example). Under the heading CAST write the names of each performer who, during any part of the film, pops up in the boiler room.

The SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS column should take into account any props you're going to have to remember to bring with you, weather conditions if you're filming outside (and they're important to the plot) and any other important considerations you feel may be worth noting.

Once you've gone through your entire script in this fashion you're almost ready to begin actually shooting your film. Only



LIVING DOLL

one major chore remains before you can step behind the lens and shout 'Action!' and that is to time each scene. This is a cumbersome yet necessary procedure that all directors have to undertake, and, while you don't have to be absolutely precise in your calculations (you can fine-tune things during the editing stage) you will need to have a fairly accurate idea of how long each scene is going to last in order to have a good idea of your final running

time (more of that in a bit).

Some directors will insist that the cast help out during this laborious process by reading their lines in the way in which they intend to recite them during filming. This can be beneficial when dealing with actors whose egos reflect their bank balances as they may well have a definite idea of how they wish to deliver their dialogue. But for your purposes a wrist watch with a second hand, note-pad, pencil and a bit of privacy should suffice.

To be eligible to enter our competition you will need to produce a film on either VHS, VHS-C or Video 8 format tape, lasting AT LEAST eight minutes and NO LONGER than twenty two minutes. With careful timing of your scenes and an accurate shooting schedule to follow, this should enable you to complete all of your filming during a single weekend. This will help keep costs down if you don't already own a camcorder and help us out when it comes to judging your work!

Well, that just about wraps up the pre-production side of things. Next month I'll be taking you through the process of actually shooting your film (and there's a good deal more to it than you may think). Details on how to enter your completed film for the competition will be given at the end of the third and final feature (which will deal with editing and other post-production procedures). But in the meantime there should be enough here to keep you busy until the next issue of *The Dark Side* hits the newsstands.

Cull



LIVING DOLL



THE SECT



Beautiful screamer
Kelly Currie

Alan Jones profiles the career of Italian horror director Michele Soavi

from those early schlock favorites *Lacrò Fulci*, *Lamberto Bava*, *Ruggiero Deodato* and *Gabriele Salvato*.

Michele Soavi (to pronounce his name correctly say Mick-up-lee So-ah-we) has only directed two movies to date - the sublime *STAGEFRIGHT/AQUARIUS* and the equally impressive, yet still unreleased in this country, *THE CHURCH/LA CHIESA*. The latter Gothic horror was produced by Argento and so is his latest movie *THE SECT/LA SETTA*.

Always anxious to promote someone whose talents I firmly believe in, when Soavi invited me over to *THE SECT* location in Rome, I was on the next plane out. Watching Soavi direct what can best be described as *THE WICKER MAN* Italian style has further compounded my unshakable conviction. Not only is he one of the slickest industry people I've ever met, he's paid his dues in spades on the long haul journey to become a major force to be reckoned with. Mark my words, this intelligent auteur is destined for a great and glittering career.

Born in Milan 33 years ago, Soavi left

school at 18 with dreams of entering the Italian Film Industry. One dream became a reality when he started acting in various low-grade B-movies. Selected credits include *ALIEN TERROR*, *CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD*, *ANTHROPOPHAGOUS*, *ATLANTIS INTERCEPTORS*, *A BLADE IN THE DARK*, *ENDGAME* and *CALIGULA - THE UNTOLD STORY*. Watch the latter movie and you'll see why Soavi has banished all memory of his nude performance! Parading this career resume, a role in the 1979 drama *BAMBULE* led to Soavi assisting director Marco Mordugno on the production side.

Soavi told me: "I also dabbled in screenwriting and worked with both *Lacrò Fulci* and *Aristide Massaccesi*/*Joe D'Amato* in that capacity. (Soavi helped D'Amato write both *ATTP* movies). I first met *Dario Argento* after he had just made *INFERNO*. I asked him to read one of my screenplays and he made some helpful suggestions. We became good friends as I summoned up the courage to ask if I could work with him sometime. When he was preparing *TENERAE* he thought of me

I've said it on numerous occasions before and I'm going to keep on saying it. Michele Soavi is the only horror director working in Italy today worthy of any serious attention. With his mentor *Dario Argento* at last achieving *Cool*-like status on the international circuit, thanks in part to the video generation, Soavi now has the whole Roman scene to himself. He deserves it. He's carrying on the best spaghetti check traditions virtually alone and remains the brightest beacon on a Latin landscape smothered with depressing disappointments.



Michele Sestri

and I became his second assistant."

1984 saw Sestri promoted to Argento's first assistant on PHENOMENA/CREEPERS. He also appeared in the film and directed the rock promo for Rolling Stone Bill Wyman and Terry Taylor's "Valley" theme from the soundtrack. One year later he received this position on Lamberto Bava's Argento production DEMONS, directed the Claudio Simonetti title track video, and played the metal-masked man handing out preview tickets. Then came the documentary DARIO ARGENTO'S WORLD OF HORROR. Sestri said, "DEMONS had just opened to big box-office Japan and a Tokyo television company asked for a promotional programme on Dario's career. As I was a fan, and the Japanese came up with the money, Dario put the two of us together."

It was only a matter of time before Sestri made his feature debut as director. That happened with STAGEFRIGHT in 1987, written by actor George Eastman under the pseudonym Lew Cooper, and budgeted at \$5 million by producer Joe D'Amato. Sestri remarked, "The enclosed story was simple but I dressed it up with unconventional concepts like the owl mask and the whole idea with the key."

Retitled BLOODY BIRD in France, DELIRIA in Italy, STAGEFRIGHT won

Mariangela Giordano in *The Sest*



the "Fear" Award at the prestigious Avenas Film Festival. Sestri played the James Dean-obsessed policeman in the movie—something not too far removed from his own personal proclivities in the locks and fast car department. After resurfacing as Argento's first assistant on OPERA, complete with sinister detective cameo, Sestri shot all the second unit footage for Terry Gilliam's THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHHAUSEN before embarking on THE CHURCH in 1989 where he also played—yes, you guessed it—another policeman.

Sestri explained: "I wanted to forge my own style and identity with THE CHURCH. Every frame was well-thought-out. I didn't include anything just for the sake of effect. I turned what was originally conceived as junk cinema into a strong essay on Karma and the ambiguous inner conflicts we all face sometime in our lives."

Prior to starting work on THE SECT, Sestri guested in Luigi Cozzi's EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THE BLACK CAT. He plays a low-rent gore director in the opening sequence. It's a role far removed from his high peer placement in contemporary Cinecittà society, something I can state as fact now I've seen Sestri is full control of his cast and crew on the \$2 million horror fantasy THE SECT.



Makeup wizard Sergio Stravetti

Casual onlookers would be forgiven for assuming THE SECT was further down the line for this brilliant director rather than just movie Number 3. I was astonished by his sure-handed command of each facet of filmmaking. It's the reason why his startling work to date stands out amongst the violent dross and connects with the target audience. Sestri loves and cares about what he puts on celluloid. That way he makes sure we care too.

Nicola Centile in the Marino Hills, next



Kelly Curtis gets it in the neck

to the volcanic Lake Nemi resort, is the main location for THE SECT. Called the Bel Air of Rome this exclusive residential area 30km from the city centre is full of heavily guarded expensive villas surrounded by leafy glades. It's a major hike to get to the house where all the action takes place, but once there the reasons for choosing it becomes apparent. The story is set in suburban Frankfurt and the German chalet nestling on the Via dei Noccioli fits the script demands exactly.

THE SECT features Kelly Curtis (Jamie Lee's younger sister), Herbert Lom, the Hammer PHANTOM OF THE OPERA, Tomas Arana, THE CHURCH and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER star, newcomer Michel Hans Adatte and Italian sleaze-queen Mariangela Giordano. Giordano appeared in PATRICK LIVES AGAIN, the unofficial Roman sequel to Richard Franklin's PATRICK, yet it's her eye-opening role in CHIALO IN VERICE she'll long be remembered for. She had a fair crack at trying to match it for gross-out shock value in THE SECT. More about that later.

THE SECT throws ROSEMARY'S BABY, Charles Manson and THE OMEN into THE WICKER MAN Mender. It begins as German school teacher Miriam, (Curtis), hits an old man (Lom) with her car. He refuses to go to hospital as she takes him home to her secluded forest chalet where he dies later that night. Not before expiring he put a strange prehistoric insect up her nose while she sleeps as part of an ancient demonic ritual. The beetle-cum-scorpion creature buries itself deep in her hair causing nightmare hallucinations, even setting her sinless life on a predestined course. For she is the key instrument in a sinister sect's plan to spread their evil desires throughout a world in chaotic flux. And with all her choices now mapped out to the last detail, Miriam must either break the foretold chain of events or succumb to the impending inescapable conception of her son—the Antichrist.



Co-scripted by Sorel, Argento and Italy's foremost comedy writer Gianni Russell, *THE SECT*, or *CATACOMBA/CATACOMBS* as it was initially referred to, was originally penned for Luca Vardone who was desperate to break into the industry as a first time director. Because Luca's brother was superstar comedian Carlo Vardone, and he was making a movie with top Italian producers Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori, Russell was hired to write a treatment as a favour to keep everyone happy. However the Cecchi Gori's couldn't

A feathered bird written in Sorel's STAGEFRONT



finance the project because Luca was such an unknown quantity. In many ways they didn't expect to. But seeing they had a commercial title, once Vittorio had coined it, they turned to Argento for help as they had produced *OPERA* and *THE CHURCH*.

Sorel continued, "Dario hated *THE SECT* story, he thought it was too similar to *INFERNO* - which it was - although it began in ancient Rome and led to the present day. But he also loved the title and we wrote a totally different narrative with a Manson cult as the basic thread. As the final script stands there isn't one detail remaining from Russell's original draft."

"Not that Sorel was particularly concerned by *THE SECT* when word filtered back to him about it. He explained, 'I was trying to write myself a script revolving around a haunted well. But *THE WELL* didn't pan out and I started seriously thinking about remaking *THE GOLEM* in modern dress. Getting to grips with the Jewish myth was hard though. I spent

Christmas 1980 in Prague scouting locations until Dario decided *BLADERUNNER*'s replicants had taken the mechanical men to the limit and finally vetoed the idea." As Luca Vardone's interest in *THE SECT* had now waned - he directed the Tahnee Welch soft-core sex movie *SILENT LOVE* instead - Argento offered Sorel the project. Sorel admitted, "Dario didn't like Luca and had no intention of using him anyway".

THE SECT script comprises of three prologues. Argento wrote the opening, set during the Seventies hippie era, showing guru Amon brutally murdering a desert commune while chanting key dialogue lifted from Rolling Stones' songs. Russell wrote the middle section outlining the cult's master plan for Kelly Curtis. And Sorel's input is her basement cellar pit where most of the supernatural action takes place.

Sorel laughed, "I had to put *THE WELL* in somewhere! As I couldn't expand

Sorel's *THE CHURCH* was inspired by the fantasy art of Boris Vallejo



the idea into a full feature, I incorporated it here instead. I like all that sort of stuff. My favorite parts of THE CHURCH took place in the dark subterranean vaults."

Set in Germany because, "Dario has a passion for the country", the director himself is more precise about the reasons for the exact locale. He continued, "The weird occurrences happen twenty-three minutes east of Frankfurt in the small town of Seligenstadt which translates as 'the place of rest and peace'. THE SECT will be my most personal film due to those sort of touches. Many of my own belongings, like the ceramic rabbit ornaments, have been used to dress the set. I recently found out that my great-grandfather was Irish too. I've read volumes on Celtic myths and Druids to discover more about my roots and I've put as much reality-based information as I can into the narrative. THE SECT started out as just another job for me but my personal research has turned it into something much more and now I'm really caught up in it."

Because THE SECT is Sorel's third film, he isn't as worried as he was on STAGEFRIGHT or THE CHURCH. He explained, "I'm in full control. I'm more relaxed. I like Kelly Currie. I went to America to cast the lead and chose her for her obvious intelligence and special facial qualities which burn a hole in the screen. She's not beautiful in the classic sense. She looks more like her mother, Janet Leigh than sister Jamie Lee, which I felt was important. But she's interesting to watch and the whole film centres on her ability to be totally believable."

"I love the location, I like the compactness of the script. And I no longer give a shit if Dario hurls across the set. I'm not paranoid anymore about him creating tension, putting the crew on edge or offering me advice which I may or may not take. THE CHURCH did me in because, after one week's shooting, I was two weeks behind schedule and Dario drove me in-

creasingly crazy during the editing. He's extremely happy with the moody atmosphere of the rushes and I finally feel he trusts me to work fast and turn in a good piece of work."

Even so, both strong-willed personalities have had a few on-set clashes. One concerned Sorel's insistence on filming exterior with May blossom floating in the air similar to Ridley Scott's atmospheric use of the same idea in LEGEND. He sighed, "The story is set in Spring and revolves around the fateful day of May 6th. Having this snow-like substance wafting in the breeze added a unique strangeness Dario refused to understand its symbolism. Herbert Lee's pre-ordained arrival signals the nest building he's starting on behalf of the sect's ultimate aim. It's curious stuff and I want THE SECT to work on a number of weird planes to engage audience attention."

With this end in mind, Sorel has filled every available inch of screen space with Dario iconography, Celtic metaphors - "The turquoise ribbons tied on the tree are what you do if you want a baby boy", he explained - and personal in-jokes. Sorel always includes referential subtext in his movies to keep attentive fans on their toes. STAGEFRIGHT contains numerous con-



Sorel and Argento on location for THE CHURCH

Surveying THE SECT personnel, it's obvious that Sorel has opted for the youth-plus ethic. He said, "I needed to be surrounded by a young enthusiastic crew". And special mention is given to first line director of photography Raffaele Neri. He added, "Although I insisted on doubling as cameraman - it was important for me to look through the lens at all times especially during the hand-held camera sequences - I wanted a very matriculate look."



Sorel and Donald Pleasance in CREEPERS

notations of great personal significance to Sorel: James Dean, DEMONS, and the opening sequence of Argento's THE BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE which crystallized his whole directorial approach.

THE CHURCH also highlights Sorel's favoured composer, Philip Glass, his favourite hobby, archery, and a humorous nod to BARON MUNCHHAUSEN courtesy of a close-up on the character key-ring - a gift to crew members. Both movies starred his ex-girlfriend Barbara Cappelletti. In THE SECT Sorel mainly pays homage to Argento again thanks to the slash-style insects which crawl out of various human orifices. He added, "That's a reference to CREEPERS, my first major assignment with Dario, and the start of my film career."

Raffaele is using only available light redirected by angled mirrors to achieve a soft, understated tension."

Another important crew member is Steadicam operator Giovanni Gebbia. He's the one person on which Sorel's main overriding objective with THE SECT stands or falls as he outlined. "The theme is a continual spiral, a vortex sucking you into the horror like the water in the collar well. Everytime there's a tense moment or shock, the camera moves in a circle. At first it's 90 degrees, then it's 180. Only during the conclusion will the camera move 360 degrees to complete the terrifying ring of deception. I'm not using camera tricks for their own sake. They have a deliberate and very real underlying purpose."

There'll be no shortage of get-wrench-



Sorel in DEMONS



Face-ripping yarns. Inset: Herbert Lom and Kelly Curtis, plus - on location with *THE SECT*

ing heave though. Then's *THE SECT*'s gory face-ripping climax after a female villain has been shot-gunned to the floor of a supermarket steamroom. Kelly Curtis' skin breaks out in blue veins. She's smugly perched by a prophetic blind and insecta crawl out of the wound in a dream sequence. She gives birth to an insectoid fetus and watches in terror while Mariangela Giordano is suffocated by a then death mask soaked in Herbert Lom's sweat.

The major splatter highlight is reserved for Giordano too. She turns into a possessed human blood fountain after cutting open her hospital stitching when raped and slashed by a truck driver. Argento's special make-up effects regimen, Rosario Prestopino and Sergio Strobili, are the

more responsible for the mayhem. Their brief also includes remote-control rabbits and a larger-than-life nasal passage as Savat's camera can follow the evil insect up Miriam's nostril as it burrows into her brain - conceptualised as a surreal optical light show.

Savat admitted, "I don't think *THE SECT* is anything too startling or that original. But it offers me a great opportunity to pull it through on my directing ability alone. Shooting in English hasn't been that difficult although sometimes I do lose track of the script. That's where working with Terry Gilliam has really come in useful.

THE SECT will be my first made to show a definite Savat style. *STAGE-FRIGHT* wasn't my story. *THE CHURCH*

was drenched in a Gothic atmosphere because that was the mark Dario wanted to make on it. I've gone for more nail-biting suspense and scalp-freezing scenes with *THE SECT*. I want the audience to be really wound up over Kelly Curtis' fate. She and Herbert Lom are real people, not stars, and I'm lucky to have them both in the picture. Their quest for realism has been extraordinary, helped by the fact they think the script is really well written."

With the basement wall scenes still to be built at Rome's De Paolis Studios, the Techno/New Age scene yet to be composed by Tangerine Dream, and a breathless February 1991 Italian release date to be met, Savat will probably follow *THE SECT* with a directing stint on Argento's planned 'Poe' series for the RAI TV network. The idea is to split the *TWO EVIL EYES* anthology, air both separately, then follow them up with four new Poe-based stories. Savat is tentatively pencilled in to direct one episode along with *HARDWARE*'s Richard Stanley, Lamberto Bava and Luigi Cozzi.

However, Savat is looking forward to the time when he won't remain in lower case print yet below Argento's bold producer poster credit. He concluded, "Hopefully I'll be taken far more seriously after *THE SECT*. I want to work for other producers. I want new challenges to grow as an artist in my own right above being told to do this, or do that - and quickly! *THE SECT* is something unusual. I feel that. There's a maturity and depth to it you don't normally find in horror fantasy. I think it's shaping up as quite a unique little picture."



Savat directs Roberto Curbishito in *THE CHURCH*



PRINTS OF DARKNESS

It's four past midnight, and John Brosnan is still trying to finish that Stephen King book. Now read on...

Turn your back for only a couple of minutes and Stephen King has produced another book. As Dame Edna advised Melvyn Bragg about the frequency of his novels appearing on the book shelves, "Better slow down, Melvyn, or we'll never catch up." This new King opus, titled *Four Past Midnight* (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99) is not a novel but a collection of four...well, they're certainly not short stories, they're more like short novels (the book runs to 676 pages, so that's an average of 169 pages per piece). These are the things that King dashes off in between writing novels!

So what's the verdict? Well, I enjoyed them but with the same reservations that I've been having with King's more recent works. You really do get the feeling that these days he is using three words where one would do and on occasion I found myself skipping sections as I read in order to get the meat of the story, something I would never have done with, say, *The Shining*, or to give a more recent example *Misery*.

Of the four I most enjoyed the first piece, *The Langoliers*, which is about several passengers on an internal flight in the US waking up from a sleep and finding

that all the other passengers on the plane have disappeared, including the flight crew. Luckily, one of the remaining passengers is a pilot but even so their problems are just beginning. It becomes like an '80s re-tel, extended episode of the old *Twilight Zone* (a fact commented upon by more than one of the characters). The second one, *Secret Window, Secret Garden*, is, as King points out in a preface, a variation of the theme of *The Dark Half*: a depressed writer trying to recover from his recent divorce receives a strange visitor who claims that he stole a story from him. The writer dismisses the claim as ludicrous but when he finds his car nailed to a garbage can with a screwdriver he realizes the man means business...

The third one, *The Library Policeman* I enjoyed nearly as much as the first. This exploits a childhood fear that is apparently common in America; that if you don't return your library books on time the Library Policeman will turn up on your doorstep. Middle-aged business man Sam Peckles thinks he's past such fears but when he loses two library books supplied by a sinister librarian, who turns out to have been dead for decades, he discovers that the Library Policeman is very real indeed. This would make a good movie.

The final piece is the least successful, and the most padded it seemed to me. Titled *The Sun Dog*, it's about a 15-year-old boy's birthday gift, a polaroid camera that produces the same image over and over again no matter at what the camera is clicked: a selection of a picket fence and a rear view of a large black dog. But as Kevin takes more pictures he realizes the dog is starting to turn...it all becomes kind of predictable, but in Reginald 'Pop' Merrill, the devious fix-it man and town money lender, King has created one of his most memorable characters. All in all, the book is a good scary read, though I'd have preferred it if it was a good, scary, shorter read.

Last month I mentioned Mark Morris's novel *Toady*, and this month, from the other side of the Atlantic, comes *Otherside*, by J. Michael Straczynski. (Headline, £14.95) which is eerily reminiscent of *Toady*. In both books the central characters are young teenagers who are having serious problems with older youths who bully them; one of the teenagers is also the school nerd - in *Toady* it was Toady and in *Otherside* it's Roger. Both Toady and Roger are instrumental in letting a malign force enter our world, the force wipes out the bullies but also corrupts



both Toady and Roger in the process. The two novels diverge at that point and become completely different in their handling of the similar theme, and both end differently too, with Toady finding redemption while Roger...well, let's not talk about that. I enjoyed both books but it might be wise not to read them too closely together as I did, as it all gets very confusing.

Two other books this month that are very similar: *Post Mortem: New Tales of Ghostly Horror* (Corgi, £3.99), edited by Paul F. Olson and David B. Silva, and *The Omnibus of 20th Century Ghost Stories* (Robinson, £13.95), edited by Robert Phillips. The main difference between these two ghostie anthologies is that the former book features all new stories by mainly genre writers, like Ramsey Campbell, Robert R. McCammon, Charles L. Grant etc while the latter volume contains stories by 'literary' writers who would not normally be associated with ghost stories (though as many of them are now dead they have become ghost writers themselves in a sense), writers such as Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Truman Capote, Jean Rhys, Henry James and Edith Wharton. Says Mr Phillips in his preface Introduction "I deliberately have excluded from this book those many would expect to find. You will look in vain for Wilkie Collins, Algernon Blackwood, H.P. Lovecraft, Ambrose Bierce, M.R. James, H.G. Wells, E.F. Benson, Cynthia Asquith, Rosemary Timperley, August Derleth, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, N.J. van der Loo, Oliver Onions (who?), J. Sheridan Le Fanu and their ilk. They are, or were,



POST MORTEM



NEW TALES OF GHOSTLY HORROR

Edited by **Russell C. Brown and Donald F. Brown**

Introduction by **Russell C. Brown**

Robert F. McGowan, Dennis J. Flanagan

Afterword by **Dean R. Koontz**

voted themselves exclusively to the genre. Their best works have by now become war-horses."

Well, what a load of bull! A few of the above could have been described as professional horror writers but to describe writers such as H.G. Wells and Arthur Conan Doyle as professional ghost story writers is absurd. And this literary snob appears to think that the 20th century ended around 1950. People have been writing ghost stories since then, Mr Phillips, and some writers have been quite successful at it. Such as the writers featured in the other volume, *Post Mortem*, not to mention writers such as Stephen King, Clive Barker, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Peter Straub and many others. Strangely enough, if I was to mix the stories up from both these anthologies, and asked someone to choose and read one at random I suspect he or she would have trouble saying which volume it came from. Though there are clunkers in both books, and a couple of really antiquated pieces in the 'literary' collection, the standard of quality is equally high. But I have to say my two favourites are in the modern volume. *Each Night, Each Year*, by Kathryn Placek, and *Stonewall*, by Thomas Yosler.

Gollancz have brought out their fifth and final collection of Philip K. Dick stories, *The Little Black Box* (£14.95). This covers the period when Dick was at his peak as a writer, 1963 to 1981, when he was prodding the envelope of reality as far as it would go, (he died in 1982) and there are some real gems here, including *He*



LIGHT YEARS AHEAD

Merion Bradley Julian May
Andre Norton
Black Trillium

Julian May's fantasy series, *Black Trillium*, explores a distant time in the saga of the noble goddess Morga, her twin, a goddess of the underworld. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld.

BLACK TRILLIUM



Katharine Kerr
Polar City Blues

Kerr's new series, *Polar City Blues*, is set in the Arctic region. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld.



John Kessel
Good News from Outer Space

Kessel's new series, *Good News from Outer Space*, is set in the Arctic region. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld.



John Shirley
In Darkness Waiting

Shirley's new series, *In Darkness Waiting*, is set in the Arctic region. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld. The story is set in a world of magic and mystery, with a focus on the goddess Morga and her twin, a goddess of the underworld.



FUTURE READING FROM GRAFTON BOOKS

Out in January

GraftonBooks
LONDON & HARPER, NEW YORK

Can Remember It for You Wholesale which led to the movie *Total Recall*. On rereading it I was surprised at how faithful the early part of the movie was to the story but very rapidly story and movie part company and go in two different directions. The ending of the story is much weirder than anything that happens in the movie. It was good to re-read one of my favourite Dick stories again after many years. *The Electric Ant*. This is about a man who discovers he's an android and that in a cavity in his chest a tiny punch tape is running through a spool. The company that manufactured him informs him that it is his 'reality-supply construct' and advise him against tampering with it. He does, of course.

Back in 1977 Joe Haldeman bust on the SF scene with a novel that became an instant classic. *The Forever War*. Written as a kind of antidote to Robert Heinlein's gang-bro *Swordship Troopers*. It's about a long space war between humanity and a mysterious alien race that turns out to be a totally futile affair (it was inspired by Haldeman's experiences in Vietnam). Since then he has produced a number of F novels and while they've all been good ones he hasn't been able come up with anything that equals *The Forever War*. The case is the same with his new one. *The Long Habit of Living* (NEL, £13.50). It's solid SF and very entertaining but it isn't going to win him any prizes (*The Forever War* won both the Hugo and the Nebula). It's set in the 21st century where the dream of



eternal youth has been realized. But not for everyone, of course. You have to pay the foundation that controls the process, which, by the way, is incredibly painful, a million dollars every ten years or die. Dallas Barr is one such an immortal who has just received another treatment and has been released, almost broke, with ten years to raise another million for the next treatment. But this time things are different: people are trying to kill him. His attempts to stay alive and discover why he's

become so unpopular lead him into murky areas involving the immortality foundation, which is more than it seems... Interesting that Haldeman favours the idea of immortality (the book is dedicated to the people doing research in cryonics and 'life extension') whereas most writers who have touched on the theme in the past have had a negative approach to the whole idea. Anyway, an enjoyable if thriller that I recommend.

Finally, another writer who seems as prolific as Stephen King. Terry Pratchett. Here is his latest, *Moving Pictures* (Collins, £12.95). You'd think send-ups of film making and Hollywood have been done to death but Pratchett does it from a whole new angle. Discworld fashion. The magic of Holy Wood is creeping into Discworld and several of its inhabitants are beginning to act strangely, turning into film stars, directors and, worst of all, producers. They begin to churn out moving pictures, with the aid of cameras containing little demons who paint the film frame by frame, and for a time it's all fun and games, but the magic of Holy Wood turns to pose a sinister threat to the stability of Discworld's reality. Very funny and well up to Pratchett's usual standard. And only 279 pages long! Stephen King, take note.

(John Brooman's latest of novel, *The War of the Sky Lords*, has just been published in paperback by VG&F at £1.99).

RICHARD LAYMON



THE STAKE

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Dan Marlowe

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Fear

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HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT

Frighteningly good gameplay is what this section is all about, and you won't get much better than *Horror Zombies from the Crypt*. The soundtrack is appropriately spooky, the action is hot-rating, and the excellent graphics are amazingly atmospheric.

So, what's it all about? OK, I suppose I'd better let you know before my ratings get totally out of control. Count Frederick Valdemar's normal peaceful existence is shattered by the uninvited arrival of an army of the undead.

Ghosts, ghosts, spectres, werewolves, vampires. In fact, just about every weirdo in the book is out there after the Count. However, this he can handle, but something has happened in the family crypt - the *Horror Zombies* are here.

Count Valdemar is no fool; he knows he has to escape, but first he must lay his family back to rest, which is where YOU come in.

Set over six levels, there are over 600 screens to explore, with secret passages, traps and rooms aplenty. Make sure you use every piece of weaponry you can find to deal out death to the Undead as they come at you from all sides and use your cunning to explore every means of putting the dead back where they belong - in the Crypt.

Horror Zombies has all the right ingredients, making it an arcade adventure not to be missed by computer horror heads.

VOODOO NIGHTMARE

From the bleak heights of Valdemar's castle, we move onto the slightly more convivial surroundings of the Tropics, and from *Zombies* to Voodoo magic.

Voodoo Nightmare may sound a particularly chilling title for a game, but don't panic. It's





nor all blood and banquets.

As Boats Barker, you find yourself stranded in the jungles of Brondombonga Land, surrounded by wild animals, natives, jungle gobs and the malevolent Witch Doctor.

The idea of the game is fairly simple. You are asked (almost politely) by the jungle inhabitants to fulfill three tasks. If you don't, then don't think you're coming out alive. But if you succeed, then you're off to Voodoo Nightmare Part 2!

As is the norm with arcade-style adventures, Voodoo Nightmare is vast in proportion, with endless miles of jungle to trek through, hordes of creepy-crawlies to stomp on and hiding out there somewhere: five jewel-encrusted temples to investigate.

I don't know about you, but endless trekking through the jungle isn't quite my idea of fun. Still, at least you get the pleasant distraction of the bush casino to while away the long nights.

Before you set out on your journey you unfortunately forgot to bring your wallet. So if you want to buy anything or trade, you'll need to get used to banana bartering: a very big way, otherwise you'll get no joy down at the casino.

With some pretty neat graphics, Voodoo Nightmare will appeal to those of you who like your horror tongue-in-cheek. If not, the long, hot journey into the jungle could be a little bit of a weary effort.

KILLING CLOUD

In stark contrast to the sultry drudgery of jungle life, Image Works' Killing Cloud throws you headfirst into the hi-tech, tense arena of 21st century San Francisco.

True to the name of the game, a lethal cloud of toxic fumes ominously over the city. Half of the population has already fallen prey to its noxious fumes and, as a rookie in the San Francisco police department,

it's your task to solve the mystery of the cloud and save the rest of the population from certain death.

With this grimy fendish plot as a backdrop to the non-stop action, the game is pretty much guaranteed as a success and, if you want to survive in this tense thriller, you'll need to be alert at all times.

Your first duty is to race the leaders of the evil Black Angel gang. Are they responsible for the deaths? As you set out on the chase, be prepared for some hot fight and driving action before you can corner the culprits and move on to destroy the cloud.

The success of the game rests largely on this mix of dark action alongside the later developments in flight and driving simulations integrated into the gameplay.

As a result, the feeling of actually being in there at the kill is greatly enhanced. The race against time, the death-defying chases and the vital clue-producing apprehensions all culminate in a nailbiting climax which you won't dare miss once you've started.

Killing Cloud is a monster of a game, set against the lawlessness and organised crime of a decaying city. If you're sure you're up to it, go buy it now.

CASAVER

From the same people who are fanatically dealing with the Killing Cloud comes the slightly less





henetic, but equally as enjoyable Cadaver, an interactive adventure to challenge all adventures.

The story? Deep in the heart of darkness lies a swamp. In the swamp stands a castle and deep in the heart of the castle awaits the Necromancer.

Hired as a mercenary to avenge the dead Lord Condu, you have been charged to penetrate the castle walls and exact your vendetta from the insane chancellor Dianus. Have you ever been truly insulted before? No? Well, hang on to this, as Kadoc the dwarf, you are a bar, a thief and a scoundrel. You are not going into the castle for any honorable reasons. No, you just want the stacks of treasure hoarded up there.

Call that an insult? There's nothing wrong with that! Anyway, in your go to take up the challenge over five levels, each containing over 70 rooms, and of course, just as many traps and pitfalls.

What gives Cadaver the edge over many other fantasy interactive adventures is the sheer scope of the scenario and the variety of obstacles you need to overcome in order to face up to the evil necromancer.

Armed with a host of spells, he will try to thwart your every step, throwing puzzles which need to be unravelled to proceed as well as laying super natural traps which will have you laid out and nailed into your coffin before you know what hit you.

True enough, there is more treasure inside the castle than even your voracious appetite can handle but, getting hold of it

will be a different matter altogether. Most of the hoard rooms are guarded by grotesque creatures as well as the odd dragon or two thrown in for good measure. Stay clear of the mutated rot and man-like water beasts if you know what's good for you. And if you want to stand any chance of making it, make the most of the magic potions and extra weaponry lying around.

Using Cadaver's unique adventure through the joystick system, your destiny is in your hands - I advise you to handle it very carefully indeed.

SPELLBOUND

For the ultimate in scary goings-

on in very unpleasant surroundings, Spellbound is certainly not for the lighthearted. As for the name, magician, you certainly don't add up to much in the Magic Circle. In fact just as you were about to obtain some semblance of co-ordination with your powers, your old master Polorat the Worlock went and got kidnapped by his evil brother Krokose.

Using just the bare abilities that you have already gained like creating walls of water and fire, levitation and strabur, throwing you and your companion Cenroapp must go out and rescue the wastek in a simultaneous two player game that's

certainly addictive enough to keep you playing even if the end never seems nearer than when you started.

If you thought you'd heard of some dices in your time, wait until you get hold of some of these. The Forbidden Marshlands, The Subterranean Slime Pits of Doom, the Underground Coffin of Confusion, the Domain of Ghostly Goings On and by far the best, the Drizzly Dungeons of Death and Destruction.

In all of these splendidly named locations, you can expect to meet up with some equally pleasant creatures whose sole ambition is to stop you getting anywhere near the Gateway to Hell and your master.

Despite the evil-sounding names, however, some of the levels aren't as daunting as you may expect and in these places you'll need to use your cunning to work out what's around the next corner, false trails abound and if you don't want to end up in a stinking swamp for the rest of your days, you'd better brush up your navigational powers.

On your way to the Gateway, you will need to keep your lifeforce topped up constantly in order to survive. Also, be sure to keep a plentiful supply of Mana to hand. This is used for spell-casting and if you run low, you could find your spells backfiring and blowing up your travelling companion. Not very pleasant.

In true Pygmalion form, Spellbound is visually stunning, with some excellent effects adding to the atmosphere of the quest. The game itself is not difficult to play, but finishing it is another matter altogether. However, with such a large amount of variety on all of the game levels, not being able to finish won't depress you overmuch when there is so much else to see and do.

Out of a lighthearted storyline comes a classic tale of evil that I have you fighting the good fight for more hours than you'll care to remember.

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It's gory giveaway time again, and this month brings another generous helping of ghoulish goodies that will have you drooling at the mouth (a normal condition among many of our readers) and make you the (burnt) toast of Transylvanian high society.



First out of the coffin this month is the film that EVERYBODY will want to win: Big Arnie's blockbuster Martion-based SF shucker, **TOTAL RECALL!** This one took over 49 million at the British boxoffice alone, and goodness knows how well it did on Mors... It's just about to make its debut at the top of the video rental charts, courtesy of GUILD HOME VIDEO, who have very kindly donated TEN copies for our readers.

Blonde bombshell Rutger (THE HITCHER) Hauer is back in action this month (looking none the worse for sinking all that Guinness) in the futuristic thriller, **SALUTE OF THE JUGGER.** This one's on the VIRGIN VIDEO label, and again we have TEN copies to dole out to the entrants who exhibit the most pure genius...



Lastly, MCMUA VIDEO are opening **GATE II** this month, a chilling supernatural adventure featuring some fab stop-motion effects. TEN copies of this spooktacular video hit are also up for grabs. Come on you little demons, get your thinking caps on!



Some readers have been complaining about their mounting phone bills, so from now on we're giving you a choice as to how you enter our creepy competition. You can either call in on our hellish British Terrorcom hotline (0898-345997) and answer five questions about recent horror releases, in which case if you answer correctly your name will go forward for inclusion in the prize draw collection. Or you can send a ghostcard to our editorial address with a corny caption for the hair-raising picture right (taken from GATE II) that will make us die laughing. Prizes will be split 50/50 between each entry method. Remember, all cassettes are VHS only, and as always the Ed's decision is final. So nyahhh!



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